THE

Interiour Christian;

OR THE Interiour Conformity:

CHRISTIANS

Ought to have with

JESUS CHRIST

Divided into Eight Books, which contain most Divine Meditations; Extracted out of the Writings of a great Servant of God of this Age.

Non magna loquimur, sed vivimus St. Cyprian.

Not our Tongues, but our lives speak the Excellency of Christianity.

Translated out of the 12th. Edition in French.

Answerp, Printed in the year 1684.

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THE

EPISTLE

READER.

Christian Reader,

TPAINTE

IN this unhappy Age of Contentions about Religion, wherein the heat of Controversy hath so much cooled the fervour of true Devotion among us, that even some great Pretenders to Piety have only an outward form of Godliness without the inward Power; like guilded Sepulchers full of dead-mens Bones; it cannot but be very seasonable, to teach all those who believe in Jesus, how to be real and Interiour Christians.

Now in my Judgment, this Book written in French, and often Printed for its Excellency, has so well presen-

ted

The Epistle

ted to the eye this Heavenly Lesson, that I would not let so precious a Treasure lie hid to the greatest part of our Nation in an unknown Language, but have taken Pains to expose it to the publick view for a publick Good; and God give a Blessing to my Endeavours.

If you ask me, What is it to be an Interiour Christian? I'le briefly tell you, An Interiour Christian is one, who being well grounded in Faith, walks with God in simplicity of Heart, and Purity of Intention, loves him above all things, serves him Faithfully, endeavours to please him constantly, and had rather die than willfully by mortal Sin break friendship with him. There's no Devil he hates worse than Hypocricy, his chiefest care being to be really in the sight of God, what he appears to be in the eyes of Men. Yea, he is more inwardly then he seems outwardly, as well considering, that God who sees our hearts, will reward us accordingly.

To the Reader.

We may Jay of the Interiour Christian what our Blessed Saviour said of Na+1 thanael, Ecce verè Israelita, in quo non est dolus, Be-Joh 1. hold a true I/raelite, in whom is no deceit: And he may truly lay of him= self with good Hezekish, O Lord ! Truth, and with a Perfect 1sa 38. Heart, and have done that which is good in thy fight. And he may say also with St. Paul, Mercin do I exercise my self, to have a Conscience void of Offence towards God, and towards Men. And therefore may safely say with the same Saint else-where, Vivo ego, jam non ego, vivit verò in me Christus, Tis not so much I that live, as Gil 2. Christ who lives in me, Mas king me a new Creature by Internal Sanctification; whereby I become Crucified to my Lusts, and dead to the World, that I may live to him who died Now for me-A 2

The Epiftle

Now we must know that there are infinite degrees of Internal Sanctification, and the least degree is sufficient to put us in Gods favour and the state of Salvation, and make us really Interiour Christians. As the least Pigmy is as much essentially a man as the greatest Gyant: This I mention, least some timerous and well-meaning Souls, who really endeavour to pleafe God in sincerity of Heart, reading in this Book, and other Spiritual Authors, more sublime and elevated wayes of advancing our union with God, then they experience in them elves, (or perhaps ever shall in this Life,) should be discouraged and tortur'd with scruples, as if they did not serve God as they ought, and were not truly Interiour Christians.

I must put such Souls in mind of what St. Paul tells us, That there are diversities of Gists, but the same Spirit, dividing to every man feverally as he will,

and

To the Reader.

and pleases. Some indeed are wonder fully elevated Saints, rapt with St. Paul into the third Heaven, rawish'd in an extatical manner with the Glimmerings of Glory, and those joyes which may be felt, but are inexpressible. Such Contemplations and Unions with God, are tare and admirable.

Others in their Re-collections and mental Prayer receive from Heaven Divine Visits, and wonderful Illuminations, which direct them bow to purific their Hearts more and more, and to advance in Piety and Godlines. These are great Proficients, and walk in a region of Light above ordinary Christians.

But if Gods Holv Spirit has not wouch a different dus these special Gifts and Graces, we ought not to be discouraged in our Pious Endeavours, but rest contented with our present state in the course of our Devotions, if upon severe examination of our Conscience, we find that with Zakariah and Elizabeth we real-

The Epifle

ly endeavour to walk in all the Com: mandments of God blameles; and dayly make it our work to conquer our selves. to mortifie our Passions, to kill our Inordinate Desires, and to make a progress in the wayes of Holiness. This is fufficient to entitle us to Heaven, and make us Interiour Christians, though without raptures and extasses, without visions and unions extraordinary, without wonderful irradiations in mental Prayer, which God only vouchsafes to some special Favourites. Think upon this, and be content with what measure of Grace Heaven bestows upon thee, walking with God in true Humility of Soul and Spirit.

Tis not much material, good Reader, in what order thou readest these excellent Instructions; every Treatise containing a Compleat Subject, independent on each other. But my advice is, to make those more familiar to thee, wherein thou sindest most gust and Spiritual

To the Reader.

ritual profit to thy Soul. This I am Jure of, whatever order thou observest, they will highly conduce to the end they were written; namely to withdraw our hearts from the Love of the World, and to advance our Union with God, by taking up our Cross to follow Jesus: This is the Spirit and Soul of this Book, and I heartily wish it may work these effects in every Reader. In the perusal whereof Remember in thy Prayers.

Thine in Christ Jesus.

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A. L.

ADVERTISEMENTS.

Thought good, Courteens Reader, to explain fome terms frequently occurring in this Treatife, to prevent mistakes in such who are

not accustomed to such expressions.

The word annihilation, is not to be taken Physically, but Morally. Now a Moral Annihilation is to acknowledge our selves, as St. Paul tells us, Not able so much as to think a good thought, as of our selves, But that all our sufficiency is of God, for whom is both the Will and the Work in Meritorious Actions. Gratia Dessuir and suggests and selved.

Our hothing, our raine, felf destruction Powerty of Spirit, are terms which for the most part lignishe the same thing as Annihilation. So that to ruine or destroy our selves, is to bring our

selves to this Annibilation.

, hA

Annihilation in some places signifies to be content to be thought of by others as of no worth, or good for nothing; an unworthy person, of reputation. And in this Sense 'tis often applyed to our Blessed Saviour.

But that the Reader may the better underfland the Spirit of the Eook by the Spirit of the Author, I have describ'd as much of the Qualifications of that Excellent Person, as I could collect from the 'Exench Presace; the perusal whereof I assure thee good Reader is worth thy paint and consideration:

Author's Life.

Extracted out of the French
PREFACE.

which of boildo if HE worthy Author of this Excellent Treatise, was a Person, whose Life was answerable to his Writings, a true Interiour Christian; elevated by God's Holy Spirit to Sublime Contemplation, making it his Bufiness to have his Conversation in Heaven, while he was upon Earth. 'Tis faid of Moses, that after he had Conversed familiarly with God, and descended from the Mount, that his Face did shine with an extraordinary Glory. So this excellent Christian came from his Prayers, as it were from Heaven, all enflamed with Divine Love, raising a holy Fire in their Breasts, who enjoy'd the Happiness of his Conversation. Core Charles

But

ferne.

The Life of the Author.

But his Goodness was more Diffusive. for many of his absent Friends received wonderful Benefit and Advancement in a Spiritual Life by his Heavenly Instruso many, as that from those Writings was extracted this Interiour Christian, not long after he had left men to live with Angels, by a Person of Worth and Quality; who was so touched to the heart by reading some of his Letters, that he thought himself oblig'd in Charity, to make them Publick for the Common Good. Especially in this Corrupt Age, wherein, alas! we find more Formal than Interiour Christians. And doubtless it was the Will of Heaven this Treatife should not lie hid, but be expos'd to the View of the World, having in a short time enriched the Hearts of many with inestimable Good, who entertain it with great Joy and Satisfaction.

He was in the right who said, Loquere ut to videam, If once I hear you speak, I shall know what you are. For its impossible to read this Book without some Knowledge of the eminent Persection of the Authour: for what Soul, unless irradiated with extraordinary Beams of Headiated with extraordinary Beams of Headiated

venly

The Life of the Author.

venly Light, could make such Discoveries, or give such Directions in Spirituality? It was from hence, that the Humiliations and Dolorous Bloody Sufferings of Jesus Christ, (so terrible to Nature) did appear to him with a Ravishing Beauty, being taken with nothing more in his

Devotions, than Jesus Suffering.

For he had a fingular Devotion to the Humiliations of Jesus, and thought himself a Person cull'd out by Providence to honour his Sufferings. He did much affect to lead his Life in Abjections; and yet notwithstanding his profound Humility, he was much esteemed, and admired by all who had the Happiness to know his Virtues. Though he lookt upon himself as an unprofitable Servant; yet God was pleas'd to treat him as a faithful Friend. Though he desir'd the Bitter-ness and Rigour of the Cross, yet God did oftentimes so visit his Soul with extraordinary Consolations, that sometimes he would cry out, When then, good Je-Sus, Shall I Suffer for you! Though he defired to follow Jesus on Mount Calvary, yet God was pleased to lead him to Mount Tabor, and vouchsafe him the Glimmerings of Glory on this side Heaven.

The Life of the Luthour.

ven. Though too many make it their Bulinels to find out wayes to please their Sensuality, he made his Body a Continual Victime of Mortification, hardly ab-Staining from Austerities, when his Weak-

ness required a Relaxation.

He earnestly desired, that after the Example of Jesus he might finish his Life on the (res; and on the day the Church celebrates the Invention of the Cross, God was pleased to rob the World secretly of so great a Treasure, lest if his Sickness had been known publickly, the holy Importunity of many Prayers might have prevailed with Heaven to defer his Happinels. He wanted no long Preparation for his Death by a Languilhing Disease, but being Fruit-ripe for the Harvest of Glory, by the constant Dews of Heaven and Fervour of Charity, upon thort warning, with wonderful Content, commending his Soul into the hands of his Saviour, he joyfully embraced Death to live Eternaly.

This shew'd the extraordinary Triumph he had made over the World, and Himself, by the Power of Grace. For though some, even Great Saints, who had left the World for Christ's sake, to avoid it's

Conta-

The Life of the Author.

Contagion, seem'd timorous at their Deaths, yet He, with an invincible Generofity, contemning the World, without forsaking it, did conquer Satan in the midst of Temptations, and smile on Death as a Friend to his Happiness. Though he chang'd not his Secular Habit, yet he had fully banisht the World from his heart, and without engaging in any other Profession, than that of a perfect Christian, he spent his dayes in the Exercise of the most Austere Religious. And this was more admirable in him, than in those Fountains, which conserve their Sweetness in the midst of Salt Waters : because he did not only keep the Purity of the Spirit of Christianity among the Infections of a Corrupt Age, but without any great noise he made notable Conquests over the Powers of Darkness, seeing by his Pious Endeavours he chang'd many Carnal Men into Spiritual Christians.

We may say without Vanity, that the World never had a more Dangerous Enemy. He stay'd in it, the better to discover its Designs, and convert Worldlings: exposing himself to combate its Allurements, that their Weakness might be known, and to testify to the World,

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that

The Life of the Authour.

that one may be a Perfect Christian in despite of this great Enemy of God and Godlines. His Example hath made it manitest to all Persons of Quality, that one may live like a Hermit in the midst of a City, and may love Evangelical Poverty, though not practise it in the Possession of Riches; and that true Self-contempt is not impossible to such, whose Birth or Imployments have advanced them to Honour: and that without being an Apostle, or Preacher, one may be an Evangelist: And lastly, that throughly to establish the Maxims of Christianity, solid Practice is more efficacious than thundring Eloquence.

And though the Graces which beautifyed his Soul, did most incline him to deep Retirements and Contemplation, yet he was so wonderfully dexterous in the affairs of God's Service abroad, that his Eyes fix'd' on Heaven, did not hinder him from affording a Helping hand to the good of his Neighbour; neither was his Zeal herein confin'd to one onely Kingdom, His Piety was so ingenious, that he found out wayes to be at the same time one of the greatest Solitaries, and yet much ingaged in the Labours of them, who endeavour'd the enlargement of Christs Kingdom. His The Life of the Authour.

His way of expressing himself, is conform to his Thoughts, and both of them to the Gospel; where such who chiesly hunt after Eloquence, and vain Curiosities, will find nothing that will please their Palate: But a Soul which relishes Evangelical Truths, cannot but find a Gust in the Expressions of this Book, which breaths forth nothing but the Spirit of Christianity. And God grant that they who take it into their hands, may find it working in their hearrs, to engage them essicationally in his Love and Service. So be it.

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BOOK I.

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Interiour Christian.

BOOK I.

Of the Love of Humiliations, which is the solid Foundation of all Christian Perfection.

CHAP. I.

That we ought to endeavour to attain Christian.

Persection, with the spirit of Humility.

not because it is a sublime and elevated condition, but because it is the will of God. We ought not to set upon the practice of Piety by a motive of grandeur, and to become greater Saints, but only to do what God wills and expects from us, and rest therewith content and satisfied.

Our happiness consists in a constant dependence on his divine will and pleasure, with a persect submission andresignation thereunto. I must be content with my condition, whatever it be, seeing it is what God expects from me; and 'tis no small

I do not

Father.

presumption to assume to our selves what great Saints have found in the practice of Piety. God calls fome perfors to glorious performances, others he places in a lower rank; in all this we must suffer him to work his will upon us, and receive with thankfulness his Divine Impressions, whether great or little; 'tis enough for us that they come from God. This is the way God calls us to walk in; a way sublime, pleasant, full of peace, in which we defire nothing but to pleafe God. It concerns us to take whatever he gives with fimplicity of heart; be it never so little, 'tis certainly more than we deserve. To be annihilated in God, is to will nothing but what God wills, and in what manner he pleases; otherwise we feek our felves, and our own fatistaction, and not purely God, and his good pleasure.

We must labour for Persection with a Spirit wholly disengaged from all self-interest. To suffer, to live poor and despised, being the only way (among infinite other means) the Eternal Father made choice of, for us to attain to Glory, and regain those Excellencies Adam lost for himself and us by fin. This being his design from Eternity, his Son, in the fulness of time, embraced the Cross with affection, and was inflamed with the desire of suffering, valuing the Cross as a thing of great excellency, being the Altar chosen for the life-giving Sacrifice by his heavenly Father: preserving the Glory and the Will of God before the natural inclinations of his Humanity, which had a repugnancy in the sensitive part thereof to pains and sufferings. This is evident from that of the Evangelist; Pater, si possible est, transeat, &c.

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pet not my will, but thine he fulfilled. And that of the Pfalmill, Sucrificium & Oblationem noluifti,&c. Then would'st not have Sacrifice or Oblation, but then half prepared a Body for me, and behold I come to do thy will. And so he did run his course with joy, though full of sufferings, because he knew

it was the good pleasure of his Father.

Wherefore, by how much the more we love and effect the Crofs, by for much the more do we participate of the Spirit of Christ, and please his heavenly Father. For, to suffer, is to sacrifice to God our pleasures and interests, uniting our selves to the design that Jesus had by suffering to repair his Father's Glory. O my Soul! if these Verities have made deep impression in thee, thou ought'st from henceforth to glory in being despised, seeing thy Glory is to procure the Glory of God, which cannot be done more advantagiously, than by imi-

tating his only Son.

Ogood Jefus! possess my heart with your divine Spirit, that may enable me to live your life! O how your humiliations seem great unto me, your abjections honourable, your poverty rich, and your Cross pleasant! My Soul doth languish to possess your Spirit, and desires it most ardently; whatever has not a relish of your Spirit, is not grateful to me. O that I had instamed affections to embrace the Cross, and that I could bear the greatest can happen to me! In the interim it seems to me that I do nothing, and when occasion presents it self, I find difficulty to suffer the least afflictions. Deat Saviour, how is this life troublesome unto me! Strengthen me forthwith to set upon the practice

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of this life, hidden, crucified, despiled, which you have taught us by your example; that I may truly say with St. Paul, Absis miles gloriari, nifi in cruce Domini nostri; Your Cross, dear Josus, is

my Glory, and I will glory in nothing elfe.

Honours, Pleasures, Riches, I declare my mortal enemies, feeing your property is to incline me perpetually to deviate from those ways to which Jesus calls me: I abhor you, as enemies of my Perfection. Ah dear Saviour! make me partaker of your life, humble, poor, despised, or let me live no longer in this life of mortality. When Heaven shall be my Habitation, I shall be content to be in Glory, because there you are also in Tryumph; but feeing that on Earth you would not be but in an abject condition, I defire there to be with you also. Alas! I march but flowly to arrive at Perfection : however, in reality I would fain be wholly humbled both interiourly and exteriourly, as your Divine wisdom sees best for me. If it was your will, I would fearch after external humiliations, for I find no better food for a Christian Soul-Perhaps they will prove hard of digestion to me; yet, for all that, they may become by use profitable and delicious Odear Saviour! feeing it is said of you by the Evangelical Prophet, Saturabitur opprebries, Give me my fill of opprebies and abjectioned Ravish with your sweetness and consolations those who know well how to use such favours; As for me, let my repast be with Gall and Vinegar, because by their relish I shall be rendred more like unto you. The policy of the like unto you.

o Jesus! why was you circumcifed? O Mary! why was you purified? Your hearts were not sulli-

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ed, and yet you submit your selves to the abjections of sinners, because to be despised was the object of your most tender affections. There were never two hearts more full of the love of Gody and never more inflamed desires after humiliations. Seeing then that one is the measure of the other, if we will testifie that we love God, we must also love to suffer for him.

How unjust are our complaints against those who undervalue pe; and how unreasonably are we disquieted when we are found by others! We ought rather to be troubled because we are not despised enough, and thus it would be with us. if we had a heart entirely Christian. 'Tis true, Grace can only infuse such inclinations into our Souls, Nature eggs us on to the contrary. And ris my unhappiness, that I who write this, shall (I fear) fall thort hereof in time of trial. For I am altogether frail, and good for nothing; and, for ought I know, what I have faid or done, which appears so beautiful, may be rotten within witness my often relapses, which sufficiently tell me what a poor abject Creature I am, and how much I deferve to be despised. leading as my superior somestion is because

CHAP. III.

The foundation of true Christian Humility.

When I confider that God is all in all, that he possesses in himself incomprehensible perfections; that he has created and provided for us infinite good things; I cannot but acknowledge, B;

all Honour, all Glory, all Praise, all Adoration, is due unto him. O how just a debt is all this from

us to the Divine Majesty han stom your loft sto

Nothing that I have in my felf an inexhaustible Mine of imperfections and miseries; that I have committed great offences, and am yet liable to more, unless prevented by Grace: Lacknowledge that I deserve to be the scorn of men; all forts of opprobries and disgraces; all maladies of Soul and Body: Darkness, punishments Temporal and Eternal; to be afflicted, macked, persecuted by all creatures, as Executioners of Divine Justice: And I look upon my felf, as the Mark, whereat should be simed these Arrows of deserved indignation.

God can never be sufficiently honoured, loved, exalted glorised; and I can never be enough debased, despised and persecuted. I ought to have not only this humility of Spirit, but likewise a will and attection to suffer for God; always esteeming my self worthy of all scom and contempt, though never to publick, if it may conduce to God's glory, and the good of others. For if I be honour'd as my condition requires, if I do not debase my self below the meanest vassals, 'tis because the Order of government forbids it, and would not be expedient for those who might abuse this condescention. However, as for me, I ought to have this will and inclination, and believe this the place is due unto the children is due to the condescention.

Atas? dear Saviour, I cannot be acceptable in your fight, unless I have an humble heart; and this I cannot have, burby your grade. For if all natural

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natural good proceeds from your bounty, much more must all supernatural grace flow from the pure Fonntain of your Mercy; and if you are the Giver of all grace, doubtless principally of true humility, which is so repugnant to nature, that there's nothing she more abhors than Humiliation.

Seeing, dear saviour, all good proceeds from you, the glory thereof ought folely to be rendred to you. Lought to take no complacence but in you, rejoycing in that you glorifie your felf, en-

riching my poverty with your abundance.

When I fee persons afflicted, poor, distressed, lame, deformed, I confess (dear Saviour) these humiliations are my due; and if you should inflict any of them on me, I would adore and love your Justice; and for what you have bestowed upon me, I adore and love your mercy. I will never complain, because no Creature can do me an injury. I ought not to look on the defigns of men, whose intentions oftentimes are only to hurt, to revenge and solace themselves with os thers miferies; but to have an eye to the purpofes of God, which are to chastise me, to better me, and to humble me. The fews put Jefus Christ to death out of revenge and envy; and God the Father had a defign thereby to fave Mankind. I will not hereafter hunt after Applause and Honour, for I am refolved not to follow the inclination of depraved Nature; but following the example of Jefus Christ, who suffered for me, I will defire poverty, contempts, pains; and uniting them to his fufferings, I will earnestly beseech him according to the multitude of his mercies to have pity on me.

If

If we would once teriously endeavour to know our selves, the beams of Divine Grace would make wonderful discoveries in our Souls, without which 'tis impossible for us to see the depth of our miseries. In this Dungeon lies a prolifical Seed of Treason ready on all occasions to conceive and bring forth all forts of iniquity. O that 'tis not sufficient to be without the black tincture of actual sin! We have the source thereof within us, and certain vitious inclinations deeply rooted; even as we find some Weeds in Gardens so fixed, that their roots seem to reach the very centre, which will never hardly be entirely pluck'd up, but daily they appear a-new, and keep us in action.

CHAP. III.

That the Centre of the Creature is his own Nothing.

Our bleffed Saviour gives me so clear a fight of my own Nothing and Unworthiness, that I am convinced this is the place of my abode, which I neither can, nor ought to abandon. When it pleases God to vouchsafe me no Heavenly influences in my Prayers and Recollections, I have no cause to complain; if the Dews of Heaven mollishe my heart, they only flow from his pure mercy. O how well-pleased am I with this view of my own weakness and unworthiness! In this I acquiesce, as in my Gentre. If it be your will, my God, to leave me in this place, I am confent, for this is only belonging to me.

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Provided you be in your place, O my God, it is enough; that is to fay, in your own Being, your Power, your Grandeur, your Glory; Soli Deo honor & gloria. O how well are you in your place, and I in mine! Rest there then, O my God; and if you vouchfafe to prevent me with any of your graces, I will abide contentedly in my place, because I shall be surrounded with your mercy remaining in my Nothing, my Weakness and Unworthiness. Seeing I know it is God's pleasure that I continue in my place, 'tis evident I cannot forfake it without displeasing him. 'Tis my duty to abide fixed in my Nothing, by a free acknowledgment that I can do nothing, and can merit nothing, for this is truth. To forfake this, and pretend to what I am not, is but to live in deceit and vanity. Ut quid diligitis vanitatem & queritis mendacium? Truth commands to fhripk into our Nothing, and rest there contentedly to please God, who is Truth it felf.

God to bring than back into his place, and guide his feet into the way of truth, did leave his own, that is, the grandeur and splendor of his Majesty, and came to us in weakness, in poverty, in annihilation, to shew us the way we ought to walk in, out of which all is but deceit and vanity. Man then must imitate the life of Jesus in the ways of annihilation and abjections. O Jesus! despised, persecuted, crucified, do you vouchsafe to put your self in my place? Alas! this only belongs to Me a wretched sinner, and 'tis for You to live in Glory.

What is man become fince the fall of Adam?
A very Nothing, infirmity and frailty it felf. What

is man in his finful condition? An Abys of pride, ofblindness, of aversion from God, and conversion to the Creatures; a mass of corruption, of poverty, and inability to good. What then ought he to do? He must humble himself, annihilate himself, plunge himself into the Abys of his own Nothing, and live in perpetual fear of his own frailty. We shall never find God, unless we lose our selves in self-contempt and abjections. If in our retreats we profit so far as to rest convinced, that the true way to come to God, is to follow Jesus Christ in poverty and abjections, and abnegation; we gain what can be got by recollection.

When I see God affords me no great occasions to suffer contempt, or pains, or powerty, lought to be humbled in my own eyes, because this is a sign I am but little in the sight of God, who sees here nothing of grandeur, which has not a great conformity with Christ crucified. God has not design'd me for any great example of Virtue, because he gives me so small a part in the profound abjections of his only Son; which is all the portion he gave him here upon Earth, having reserved for him in Heaven the full possession of his infinite Grandeurs and Persections,

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CHAP. IV.

That the greatest Saints have attain'd to Perfection by a singular love of self-contempt and abjection.

Ontempts and abjections are the dearest dolights of the Friends of God. Although exteriourly they may possess Riches, yet their heart is well advanced in the effeem and love of Poverty. If they live in Honours, 'tis but in appearance, their hearts having an affection to be despifed. Nature indeed does not relish this kind of life, because it fights continually against our senfual inclinations. Human reason finds little or no gust herein, seeking God only by her own light a but Grace elevates a Soul above fense and reason; pushing us on to supernatural actions. Jefus Christ himself having resolv'd to embrace the folly of the Grofs, did not do it but by a supernatural impulse, as is manifest by his combat with the inferiour part of his Soul in the Garden ; Father if it be possible, let this Cup pass from me.

are such who have been super-eminent in selfcontempt and abnegation. Who does not admire
the generous Spirit of holy Panla, that Review
Lady, who being enamour don the poverty and
humiliations of Jesus, forsook Rome and all het
Relations, to embrace a poor and abject life?
She that could have done very much for others
with her Riches in that capital City, did presen

the Stable at Bethlebem before sumptuous Palaces.

Elegi abjettus effe in domo Dei.

Alexius might have done God good service in a marriage life; yet he was fo ravish'd with the beauty of a life hidden and despicaple, that he forfook Father, Mother, Wife, Friends, Possessions, Honours, which may be kept with a good conscience: but having a Divine call to the eminency of an abject life, by a wonderful miracle of grace, he, amidst his dear Relations, would not suffer natural (though lawful) affection to take a lodging in his heart; he afflicts himfelf with hunger; in a House which belong'd to him; he becomes the fcorn and sport of those Servants, to whom he was Master; his heart continued constant and faithful, to defire nothing but abjections, and no batteries of human reason could conquer or weaken his resolutions. O how this way is elevated above the low defigns of our nature, which is soo much enamour'd on flattering vanities!

Many fly from abjections and sufferings, thinking to glorifie God in a more noble manner, by actions more glorious and profitable to others: but this is rather to follow our own inclination, than the example of Jesus Christ. For we ought to serve him after his model, and not according to our fancy: and we see his life was a life of suf-

ferings and humiliations. A separate to a remando

Tis wonderful to confider the elevated Soul of St. Armogastus, a Count and great Seigneur, condemned by the King (a Persecuter of Religion) to keep Beasts all his life, and die by miseries and poverty in this employment. Tis wonderful to consider what a Kingdom and Sovereignty abjection

ction had erected in the heart of this great Saint, manifesting it self daily by supernatural actions. For he loved nothing more dearly than to see himself buried in deep Oblivion, and to be despised by all Creatures; and the miseries he suffered in this low condition, were the delights of his Soul. Whilst other Nobles, his Countrey-men and Contemporaries, liv'd glorious with their Tryumphs in the Courts of Emperours, Armogastus liv'd amongst Beasts, as if good for nothing, he deserv'd not the company of men.

O Armogastus! where is the generous spirit of a Cavalier? where is the courage of a Gentleman? why do you not quit this employment, at least that you may shine bright in the grand exercises of Christianity? Free your self by slight, and in some other Countrey preach the Gospel, do marvels in helping the poor and miserable; but continuing thus miserable in your self, you cannot arrive to any excellency in Christian Virtue.

Let me alone (says this great Saint) in my abject condition; this suffices me, and I am content to be thus thought as a thing of no worth, O how well am I pleas' d to be thus scorn'd and forgotten! Happy are those who preach the Gospel; happy are those who are merciful to others: I have as great an esteem of them as you; but likewise, happy are those who are as nothing in their own eyes.

To be poor, despised, annihilated, and miserable, shall be the only matter of my discourse as long as I live; by this means I am emptied of my self, and of all Creatures, and made capable to be filled with Divine graces. O that these things did touch our

hearts with a fenfible Devotion.

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That we have only so much of the true Spirit of Jesus Christ, as we have an inclination to abjection.

F the purity of love be on Earth, it is in the heart of those who love abjection. seeing they defire nothing but the interest of God, his glory purely, being in a manner wholly absorpt in self-oblivion. To behold God advancing others to states sublime and glorious, that they are but as atoms in comparison, and to rest content in their abjections, is a matter of greatest difficulty, because herein they quit even their own spiritual interests, being Tatisfied with whatever God does for them, and with that measure of glory he will have us bring unto him, though never so little. 'Tis true, that this fort of abjection was not in Jesus Christ, because being God, the fulness of all grandeurs belongunto him. But this is altogether proper to us, because we are Creatures, poor and abject; and that little God gives us, is more than we deferve, feeing we of our felves can merit nothing.

Tis to be feared there are but few who follow Jesus Christ in the practice of that abjection he loved for our sakes. In our thoughts and words we may do it; but when any occasion of humiliation or suffering happens, we make the bravest pretensions possible to be freed from it. Even such who make a profession of Devotion, will suffer the want of nothing, nor any injury from others;

they

they are for governing affairs as they please, without any subjection or dependance; shunning abjection, because they think they can more glorisie God by Grandeur and Reputation in the world. This is a meer illusion of self-love, and a vanity of nature, which in every thing affects to be ex-

alted, and not to be humbled.

Notwithstanding, let us think and say what we please, what measure we have of the Spirit of lefus Chrift, is according to the degree of true mortification and felf-denyal we find in us. He expects we should honour his voluntary humiliations with the facrifice of our pride. Now, in a Sacrifice the Hoft immolated is deftroy'd, and depriv'd of its former being; so that we must make a continual Sacrifice of our reason and understanding, of our will and inclinations, to the judgments and commands of others: of our reputation, by a love to abjection: of our goods, by poverty: of our health and corporal fatisfactions, by pains and aufterities: In a word, we must facrifice all our natural inclinations to the honour of God, being as well content with adverse accidents as prosperous successes; because the good we of humiliations is better for us than prosperity.

It is an excellent Lesson we learn by the love of abjection, but 'tis very hard to take out, and without a continual looking over is soon forgotten. The virtues which consist in action, are more easily practised, less troublesom to us, and more satisfactory to others: But those that consist purely in suffering, as Humiliation, Patience, Abnegation, are very difficult, O Jesus! abject and humble

humble, infuse into my Soul the Science of Saints, and a relish of contempt of the world, and I shall learn perfectly the Lesson of true humility, which is above the apprehension of human reason.

Our bleffed Saviour sometimes puts us upon the undertaking of certain good designs, whereof he wills not the Execution, but the Practice of many Virtues, which arise in their pursuance and failing of the desired issue. Nature is much disturbed at ill successes, but God, by the wonderful contrivance of his wisdom, oftentimes more glorises himself by adverse than favourable events. For the dispositions of humiliation, resignation, and contentedness, which he sees in a Soul, are more

pleafing than what the defigned.

St: Lewis earnestly desired to re-establish the glory of God in Palestine: all sell out contrary to his good designs; but the purposes which God had to advance his glory, took good essect. For this great King was humbled and made abject in the eyes of the world, salling into the hands of his Enemies, his Army being destroyed either by the Sword or Pestilence. O how these grand humiliations (in the midst of which the invincible Soul of this holy King rested more content than in a Trpumph) did render a marvelous homage to the Son of God, in the self-same place where he suffered for us! Perhaps this glory was greater in his sight, than if the Sword of St. Lewis had sacrificed all the Insidels in Palestine.

Our weaknesses and impersections are as ill Trees, because they cannot of themselves bring things to maturity; however, they do not fail of bringing forth trust in the worst successes by ab-

jection,

lection, humiliation, and felf-denial When we cannot do the good we would, 'tis no fmall good to acknowledge our infufficiency and unworthiness. When we are hindred from our usual recollection, by some incommodity, we may hope that one good hour of fuffering and abjection with a contented mind, will prove better to us than an hour of Prayer, wherein, perhaps, we should take more felf-fatisfaction. When we think the Soul is not in fit temper to converse with God, because we are disturbed with many importunities, let us remember that this may proceed from Nature a but the repofe of grace is that which is only necessary for recollection. Now, the repole of grace finds her felf better in croffes, and pains, and abjections; than otherwise. In tribulatione dilatasti mibi My heart was enlarged towards God in tribulations am content with my Powerty, because

ic brings me confedence lades your Riches; I thould forget what fam, if I were not full of wants and imperied one; I am well pleated

That the fight of our own Nothing, inspires us with self-contempt, and the love of God.

The principal reason of our little or no adment, is because we do not sufficiently depend upon grace; we are not so frequent as we ought in our recourse to God; we too much rely on the Creatures, that is, on the means we use, for our proficiency; as, the reading of good Books, Conferences, Sermons, Meditation, &c. All these are very good, when they are done with great confidence in God, and

and fervent Prayer; for nothing but an Al-

our Miferies, and crown us with Glory.

God is an infinite good, in whom all fulness dwells; and whatever good is in the Creature, are but emenations from Him: the Creature of it felf being but a meer Vacuum, and privation of goodness. As we cannot conceive a greater fulness than is in God, so we cannot imagine a more extreme indigency than is in the Creature. Tis the same thing to be God and all Goodness, and to be a Cicature and Nothing: the One is all Abundance, the Other all Poverty. Every one grants this truth, but without ferious reflection; which is the cause we have no true felf-denial, and diffidence in our own abilities, and as much as we rely on our selves, we hinder the operation of grace in us. O my God! I am content with my Poverty, because it brings me to the knowledge of your Riches; I should forget what I am, if I were not full of wants and imperfections. I am well pleased that you are Alf, and I am Nothing, but what you vouchfafe to bestow on me mos- list a sun

The three Divine Persons can only proportionally communicate to each other their infinite Persections. I, poor Greature, can give nothing to God, nor do any thing for him. The best I can do, is to acknowledge my inability and weakness; neither can I do this, without

his grace, which also he gives unto me. William

God and a Creature, that if I should lay down my life for God's sake, it would be less than if

a Pismire should die for the greatest Monarch. Whatever the glorious Angels or Saints in Heaven, or his Servants on Earth, can do for God, adds nothing to him. We cannot dive into the full depth of our Nothing, God only knows it; and what we discover by it, is by the illumina-

ting Rays of his Grace and Mercy.

To understand this well, we must know, that God is not glorified by our good actions, but inasmuch as they are agreeable to his will, from whence they receive the tincture of goodness; and he magnifies his bounty and mercy, by accepting and rewarding our small performances. So that the graces and favours he bestows upon us in this life, and the glory of the other, are

the effects of his pure goodness.

Tis very advantagious for a Soul thus to know her own Nothing, for it makes her a Martyr of Love, and loving God will do any thing for him; and by this knowledge, fees that of her felf she can do nothing. So that, hanging as it were between will and weakness, the breaths forth such desires as did St. Austin; If I was God, and you a Creature; I would willingly become a Creature, that you might be God. But perceiving this to be an impossible imagination, this poor Soul increases her Martyrdom, and dies of love, because not able to do any thing for her Beloved. Yet this one consolation does revive her, in that though fhe can do nothing, her well-beloved can do all, and taking delight in what he is, and that he hath no need of any thing, the repofes quietly in the bosom of God, who is herall, and final happiness.

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CHAP. VII.

That God is glorified by our annihilation.

Nothing but Divine Faith can teach us to love mortification, and the annihilation of our felves. Natural and worldly wisdom cannot relish it, and therefore are not to be consulted, or hearkened to, being but blind guides in

the practice thereof.

The fin of pride has ruin'd the Glory and Kingdom of God in our Souls, and that cannot be re-established, but by our ruine: and by how much the more we are mortified and dead to our felves by fo much the more God is revived in us. Poor Creatures as we are, we afflict our selves because we are so weak, and good for nothing, without talents, without knowledge, that left to our felves, all things go wrong with us. O that we would learn to be content with these miseries, that we might thereby arrive to the happy state of annihilation, we might then bring as much glory to God, as by great performances; for in all these privations the Soul finds no relyance or confolation in her felf, or in any other Creature, but in God alone.

Holy 706 never brought more glory to God, than when he was plung'd in the Abys of humiliations, on a Dunghil. God glorifies himself in Heaven, by the exaltation of his Creatures; here on Earth, by their humiliation. Do we not see that the Wisdom of the eternal Father did

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prescribe to his Son this way of honouring ham on Earth? Hath not our blessed Saviour taught us by his words and actions in the constant practice of self-denial? And think we to find out a better way to glorisie God, than what our Divine Master hath set before us?

There's nothing wherein a Creature can more purely glorifie the Creator, than by a willing submission to that self-destruction, which God works in us : for where there is the least of the Creature, there's most of God. But in this God does in a manner work all, and the Creature yields obedience to his operations. To bear patiently the deprivation of light, and fweetness, and sensible influences in Heaven in our recollections, may do us more good than the most illuminated and gustful Prayer. To be abandon'd and forfaken by our Friends, and bear it with patience and refignation, may more profit us than their friendship and services. And so it is in the loss of other things, because in derelictions and deprivations we feek God with a more purified intention; there being less of self in it, having not the fatisfaction to act, but only to receive the loss of what is dear to us, meerly because it pleases God thus to deal with us for his greater glory.

Tis a fad thing to consider the blindness wherein I have lived. O how hard a thing it is for human reason to apprehend the Doctrine of the Son of God! Tis true, it teaches us to cruciste and deny our selves, which is what naturally we fear and dread. The measure of God's love to a Soul is to be judged by its des

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gree of humiliation; which is a way without all exception, seeing the Gospel tells us, that whosoever does not deny himself and all worldly things, cannot be the Disciple of fesus Christ. O dear Jesus, humbled for us! I see the way where in you have walked, and that I must take up my Cross to follow you; I am content to accept it,

and am willing to be your Disciple.

Be it then that my Body be afflicted with fickness, my Goods lost, my Honour in the dust, and I become, as I deserve, of little or no esteem and repute: Be it that you withdraw from me your Divine Illuminations in Prayer and Recollection, so as to be in a manner void of understanding, ficut equus & malus, quibus non est intellectus: Provided, dear Jesus, that I be but content with these humiliations, it is sufficient; I shall be happy. Let others ask of you what they please; as for me, my desire is to be entirely annihilated, and that my portion may be to honour your Divine humiliations.

We are not couragious enough to fight as we ought, to destroy in us our sensual inclinations, for we are too feeble against our selves, and too indulgent to our desects in this spiritual combat. But, O my God, put too your helping hand, and work in us your will, that we may be humbled, and contentedly submit to your operation.

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CHAP. VIII.

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That the Soul is Rich, when she possesses the love of self-contempt.

GOD has infus'd this thought into my Soul, that the love of self-contempt, and the desire of humiliation, may be that hidden Treafure mention'd in the Gospel, Thesauro absconduta in agro, Matt. 13.

'Tis really a great Treasure to love abjection; yea, a Treasure that contains abundance of inestimable Riches: but they appear not outwardly, being hid on purpose to preserve with more security; And he only has this Treasure, who keeps well hidden what he possesses.

Tis a Treasure hidden and unknown to the world; For who would imagine that there should be any thing so rich and precious in Sufferings and Humiliations? Should our senses, or carnal prudence, or human reason, make enquiry, would they search bere to enrich themselves, and satisfie their desires? We could never have thought that a hidden Treasure was here enshrin'd, if Jesus Christ, who put it there himself, had not reveal'd this great secret to our Souls, by his peculiar savour, and merciful illuminations.

If we will have this Treasure, we must buy it, and give for it whatever we possess: that is to say, we must lay down our whole Patrimony, the fatal Inheritance left us by our first Pa-

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rents,

rents; namely, affection for Honours, for Pleafures, for Riches; too much seeking our selves, and our own interests, the love of our own excellence, and all the other wretched movables, which we possess by being conceived in sin, and brought forth in iniquity. If we will not be content to part with all, yea the utmost farthing, we cannot be enriched with this Treasure.

O how rich and happy is he who does posfess it! For it is a Treasure, which, as the world cannot give, so it cannot take it from us; and as long as we are in quiet possession thereof, we find God in our Souls, and such a prosound peace, as passeth all human understanding. When one has purchas'd a good Estate in Land, we are ready to say, He is in a good condition; what need he fear now, having a sure soundation of subsistence? If a War happen, the Enemies can't carry that away with them: they may indeed deprive him of his Money and Goods; but for his Land, that is fix'd and immovable.

Tis the same case with this precious Treafure; when once the Soul hath it in possession, and will not part with it, she need not fear, she has sure hold of subsistence for her spiritual life. Weither the World, mor the Devil, nor all the Enemies of our Salvation, let them make never such surious on-sets, can rob her of it; it surpasses their power, and belongs not to them. This mue, they may deprive her of some movether, as sensible consolations, the love of auadries, the desire to undertake brave actions for the Glory of God, as to go to Canada or England, for the conversion of Souls to the Catbolick Faith; in a word, all the fair Idæa's of Spirituality. The Devil, the World, Nature, has a mind to these movables; and a Soul that possesses only these, has nothing but what may be taken from her: but whosoever possesses this Treasure of the love of abjection and self-denial, is rich for ever. And when God is pleased to discover to a Soul the value thereof; Pre gandio illins vadit, & vendit universa que habet, & emit agrum illum; she joyfully parts with all she

has, to get it in possession.

We have a double right to pretend to the poffession of this Divine Treasure. The first is, our natural inability to good: the second is, our criminal sinfulness. These two lay upon us a continual obligation to endeavour after felfdenial and annihilation; and this endeavour is very pleasing to God, who delights to see a Creature acknowledge what is due to it felf, and render to him his deserved Glory. The Son of God began as a Gyant to run in this way of felf-contempt, by his Incarnation; for 'tis a wonderful humiliation for God to become Man: andhe finished this course by his Death on the Cross, which was as low as humility could defcend. For God-Man to die an infamous death, between two Thieves, as a Malefactor, and his whole life besides was but as one continued humiliation: and yet (alas!) we pass away our days in vanity, calling our selves Christians, tho all for exaltation of our felves, deftitute of felfdenial and true humility. O wonderful blindnefs!

draw me after you by the powerful attracts of your mercy? Your ways are pure, and pleasant, and odoriferous to those whose Souls are enlightened with the Rays of Grace. You, (O Jesus!) establish your Empire in humble hearts, and reign there in peace; as the Devil sets up his Kingdom in proud Souls, and there domineers with intolerable Tyranny.

CHAP. V.

What profit we draw from humiliations.

Pains and Miseries humble the body; Poverty, Riches, Contempt, Reputation and Honour, Death, Life, aridities in Prayer, spiritual Consolations; all these conduce to purifie Virtue, and sacrifice man wholly to God. Some gloriste him by action, some by suffering, others by privations and humiliations: and these last are the greatest Saints, though here despised, and known to God alone. We ought to resign our selves to the conduct of God's spirit; but if it was lest to our own choice, the way of abjections is best and safest. Job did more gloriste God on the Dunghil, than in his Palace. Happy is he, who in glorisying God, sollows the call of his holy inspirations, in a way which the world neither does nor can well understand.

knowledge, that human wisdom is but folly before God, which continually eggs us on to get

out

out of the happy state of abjection, upon the fairest pretences imaginable, as the salvation of souls, to help our Neighbours, and the like. Notwithstanding 'tis safest to yield our selves up to the sole conduct of God's holy Spirit, the order of whose providence we cannot shun. God glorisies himself in Heaven, by the exaltation of his Creatures, on Earth by their Humiliation. Let no person complain then, that he cannot be instrumental to the glory of God; for let him but heap up his own miseries, and lay himself thereon, as Isaac was on the Altar, and then sacrifice himself by a voluntary annihilation, with the fire of Divine Love, and God will be glorisied thereby.

When a Soul is left to her self in Prayer, so that aridities and desolations do darken her wonted light, and deprive her of the usual seelings she had of God and Goodness, she may make her address in these or such-like words; My God! I am nothing, and I am contented with all my heart with this dealing with me; it is your pleasure thus to mortisse me, and I have no other will but yours. You have sometimes vouchsafed unto me illuminations and consolations, which were dear unto me; but now you are pleased to deprive me of them; blessed be your name; I am contented

with your pleasure.

Tine

If poverty, or ill success, or sickness, afflictus, let us apply our selves to God, with these, or such-like words; My God! I can do nothing of my self, but I am well pleased with what you do not more; sacrifice me wholly to the grandeur of your Majesty, whatever relactance I find in Na-

The

there, upon the Altar of my miseries and impersethione. Little Isaac, ready to be facrificed by his Father's hand, might have said these, or such-like words; I had hopes that in after-times I might have been signally instrumental for the gloey of God; and that, according to his promise, out of my Loins, by continued Generations, should come the Messias: but I sacrifice all this before-hand, and restect on nothing but the Burnt-offering God is pleased to make of me by my Father's hand.

St. Lewis had hopes to establish the glory of Jesus Christ in Palestine; but seeing his Army deseated, he might comfort himself, in saying, O my God! seeing 'tis not your pleasure to have it so, but have humbled me and my Army by the Pestilence and Sword of your Enemies, your will be done, I submit unto it. I behold the generous Enterprises of your Servants, and their great Attempts, and bless you for them: but my comfort is in the consideration of my abjections, which have brought me to a state wherein I see God alone, and possess them in the denudation of all Creatures, after the example of fesus Christ; Christus non sibi placuit; whose work was only to do your will.

Let us not then so much disquiet our selves with our impersections. They are indeed but an ill brood, and deserve not to be loved; but we must bear them with patience, seeing they serve to debase our selves in our own eyes, and to conform as in some fort to the infinite humiliations of selus Christ crucified for us. Man was created in the state of innecency, now he born in a sinful condition. He has then had two opposite ways to conduct him to Glory.

The first was a state of Exaltation, happy, and enjoying all Creatures freely; but the second is a state of Abjection, in misery, and denudation of all Creatures. He that will walk a third way, attempts above the condition of that from whence he is fallen, and that provided for us after this life.

CHAP. X.

The way how to arrive to perfect humiliation.

fect this: First, the deprivation of all exteriour things; as, Riches, Honours, Pleasures. This is the first advance a Soul must make to draw near to God: for as long as there remains the least inordinate affection to these things, she can never make any great progress in finding God, being setter'd as it were by other affections, and so cannot have perfect possession of God, being excluded by the Creatures, which more or less take up the heart.

When necessity or charity require it, we may have the real possession of these things, and live only in disposition of spirit, and affective poverty. However, it will be matter of joy to be freed from them, because for the most part they rather hinder than advance us towards union with God. And if we have not a great care, Nature will cheat us with a pretext of Charity, and helping others; which is but a good illusion,

fion; for sometimes they who have the less Riches, have the more charitable hearts.

Tis good counsel to forsake Riches and Honours, when it may be done conveniently; but when, by secret tracts of Divine Providence, they forsake us, 'tis our duty to possess our Souls in patience, and be contented; which is in a manner better than if we our selves had left them; especially when we believe these losses happen'd by our own fault and imbecility; for this brings us to a greater abjection and selfs contempt, which is the centre whither we ought to tend.

If there was nothing else good in poverty but this, that it mortifies our liberty and independence, whereof naturally we are so amorous, it is a great happiness to be enrich'd therewith. When we are out of Employment and Honour in the world, we are look'd upon as unprofitable, and easily forgotten and forsaken by our best Friends; tisso much the better for our humiliation.

This is the second deprivation that we must fusser. O the great Grace that is necessary to carry on a Soul to God, when we are despised by our Friends, whereby they become rather the subject of affliction than affection to us. Without doubt we have a strong inclination to them, to whom we are so glew'd, that without some great and special grace we can never mortise our selves therein, without some attach to conserve such friendship. They are happy occasions, whereby we are deprived of our Friends without sin; in losing them, we lose a great upholder of self-love in us.

St.

St John Baptist, when very young, lest his Father's house, to live in a Desart with God alone. Great Saint! they are Saints whom you forsake. I know that very well (says he) but they are my Relations that have an affection for me. O what a violence is this to nature! For when an attach to Friends, (especially if virtuous) seems more spiritual and reasonable than any other affection, to mortiste our selves in this, is an extraordinary Sacrifice to God, and only granted to such Souls whom he carries on to great persection. But we must pass further

yet:

For there's a third deprivation to lose our selves, which is, to be esteem'd as Fools for Christ's sake, according to that of St. Paul, Nos stulti propter Christum. To love, to obey, and be in subjection; to have no reason, and yet to renounce our own reason, and to enthrone Faith in our Souls for direction. O how the pure light of Faith discovers to us, that we ought to be well pleased to have no great natural parts, but to be (as it were) good for nothing! For the view thereof, if it come to the heart, does powerfully annihilate the natural inclination we have to be efteemed. To confent willingly to be abject and despised, is a great means to empty us of this felf-love; and according to the meafure of this evacuation, is the degree of perfection.

O my God! how hard a thing is it for us not to seek our selves, and not at all to pretend to esteem and excellence! The desire we have thereof, is as intime to us as the marrow of our bones:

bones; and in a manner in all our actions, whether for our selves or our Neighbours, we seek more or less our own excellence. The greatest Saints have had little esteem of their own Talents in their own eyes, when they have been obliged to make them glorious in the sight of others. And unless they did cause them to appear for the good of others, they did tend to humiliation, plunging themselves in their own Nothing, to bring down thereby all Pride of heart.

the slet of the CHAP. XI.

That we ought to leave our selves wholly to God to become annihilated.

Christ, he will treat us as his Father treated him, for Divine Love has severity as well as Divine Justice. Happy is that Soul, which sall on five with Divine Love) is not content nor satisfied, till the has so wholly sacrific deher self to God, that the love of the Creature is burn'd to nothing. This Love is a Sun full of fire and light, which by little and little draws up the vapours from the Earth, (that is, the Creatures) and drinks them up.

I have a business in hand, which puts me to hard labour; namely, to mortific my felf in spirit and affection to all Greatures; if I can bring it about, I shall be happy. All that I have done hitherto, is but a preparation to take up my

Cross,

Cross, and entirely to follow Christ in his humiliations. I see him born in a poor abject manner in the eyes of men, and thus, like a Gyant, he begins the course of his abjections. Why do we delay to follow him by annihilation, poverty, and self-contempt? Let's never leave him, whatsoever we suffer. For my part, I have made a solemn protestation, that I will follow him so close by being crucified to the world, that every moment of my life I shall be able to say, The not I that live, but fesus crucified who lives in me.

Let us not wonder at the proceedings of Jesus Christ, who preaches to us nothing but death and annihilation, the Cross and abnegation. Tis because our Soul, insected with sin, wherein we are conceived, is so strongly corrupted, that all her operations are impure. Jesus Christ is come by his grace to cleanse this impurity, which is so deeply fixed and in grain, that except we resolutely correspond to the workings of grace in us, we shall still remain in our imperfections; which grace tends to bring us to self-

contempt and annihilation.

Having this day received my Saviour in the bleffed Sacrament, I kept my felf as it were wholly annihilated while he continued in me; and permitted him to do in me and for me what he pleafed, both in relation to his Father, and my poor Soul, and those persons for whom I had interceded in the dreadful Sacrifice. It seems to me I ought not to mingle the operations of an impure Creature with those of Jesus. O that Jesus would alone work in me what is my duty! I ought to plunge my self in my own Nothing

Lib. 1. The Interiour in his presence. If I must love God, Jesus will work this in me; if I must pray, Jesus will be my Advocate; if I must glorifie his Father, he will glorifie him, and I will sweetly consent to all his operations. O Jesus! be you All, that I may be Nothing; work your will in me, I will remain in my Nothing, to let you work all in me without relistance. Many good Souls henour the abjections of Jesus Christ, but few will practice them, or imitate his poverty and humiliations. Shall we think that it did not bescem you to be so debased, and thus to suffer? O Jesus! is not this to make no account of your example, and condemn you of Folly, who are the Wisdom of the Father? 'Tis a great folly to be thus centorious; and certainly, the more we participate of your poverty and humiliations, the more we participate of your wifdom. Come then, Omy Soul, let us follow Jefus poor and abject, and live poor with him, and thereby testifie our love to him, and our fideliy. orea mandor shoet a mar

CHAP. XII.

That we must renounce our sinse, and human reason, to love humiliations.

The impediments that our sensitive part brings to perfection are easie to be discovered, but the interpositions of human reason are nice and delicate, and few discover them. They are hard to conquer, and many cannot be persuaded

fuaded of their badness; for reason is ingenious to feduce by a thousand fair pretences, which we dare hardly condemn, appearing to reasonable; but the example of Jesus Christ is a-bove all reason and human prudence.

What reason was there that the Roman Emperours should live in tryumphs; that cruel Herods should shine with Honours, and melt in Pleasures; that the hard-hearted Jews should enjoy all worldly contents and abundance: and in the interim, the Son of God should be born in a Stable, should fly by night into Egypt, live a poor life in a shop with a Carpenter, overwhelm'd with pains and difgraces? However, thefe are the proceedings of the eternal Father, to confound thereby our human prudence, and teach us to renounce our selves, if we will be good followers of Jefus Chrift.

As long as we give more ear to the perfuafions of human reason, than to the light of Faith, we shall never make any great progress in Piety. If one be in a poor and abject condition, human prudence is for Advancement and Riches, when any occasion presents it self. If one be born to Honours and Possessions, reafon fays, Leave them not, to become poor and abjest. How can we draw our selves out of Nature, to imitate Divine Jesus, if we will always

follow the Maxims of men?

We are very busie to live in the world according to our condition; but we do not remember sufficiently, that our chiefest care ought to be to live the life of Jesus Christ, and let all o-ther obligations give place unto it. Jesus Christ

D2

executing the eternal purposes of his Father, in a poor, despised painful life, did infinitely glorifie him thereby. Before the Incarnation, God was not infinitely lov'd and glorified out of himself, but only in himself; inasmuch as the humiliations of one that is God, brings an infinite glory to God, which before he had not. A Christian Soul likewise executing the divine Will of the eternal Father, by following his Son in a life of humiliations and felf-contempt, does glorifie him with fovereign Honour: For 'twas decreed from all Eternity, that the Members should live the life of the Head; Quos pradestinavit, conformes fieri; and first sutter with him, that they may at last with him be glorified. All human reason must vield to this divine determination. O Jesus! how strange are the foundations of that perfection to which you call us! They are nothing but Deaths, Renunciations, Poverties, Abandonments, and Croffes; fo that whatfoever is agreeable to Nature, seems wholly contrary to Grace. Why do you not, dear Saviour, bring man to his Nothing in a moment by your Omnipotency, to make him thereby a new Creature? Why will you that he must annihilate himfelf and contribute to his own destruction. O how the methods of your Wisdom are admirable! Your defign is hereby to bring man to love you. But he can never do this more generously, than by the strongest efforts of selfcon empt and annihilation. Human reason prompts us to self-love and self-esteem: Divine reason inspires us with self-contempt and abnegation. Abraham facrificing his Son, did foolishly

foolishly in the judgment of human reason, as being an enemy to Himself, and his whole Family: but this was an action of wondersul prudence in the judgment of Divine reason; shewing thereby that he loved God more than himself and his dearest Relations. Come then, O my Soul, let us strive to be dead to all things but God, and to annihilate our selves for his sake I see an unspeakable beauty in the horror of mortifications and sufferings, seeing they are the source from whence purity flows into the Soul.

CHAP. XIII.

That self denyal and annihilation is better learnt by practice than speculation.

I know now better than ever, that abjection is the way wherein we must march, to advance assuredly to the persection we aim at: all other ways are liable to deceit, but self-denial is without delusion. O how sew do consider the proceedings of Jesus Christ! and sewer dive into and comprehend his holy dispositions! But sewest set upon a persect imitation of what they know.

Let us fall to work, we know enough of it. We are not ignorant how Jesus humbled himself in the Womb of his Virgin-Mother, and
there remained nine months, and at his Nativity did increase his humiliation, by being born
in a Stable; continued them all his life-time,

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Libia.

and finished them by his Death upon the Cross, the grand Theatre of his humiliations. We know all this; it only remains to imitate him; Grace will conduct us, if we faithfully correspond to God's Inspirations. To this end God permits that our Friends fall off from us, that some little disgraces happen, that we are somewhat despifed, and fuffer by others, that our imperfections are discovered and made known, and that we are censur'd for undertaking to aim at perfection. All this tending to humble us is good, what way foever it come, and no better thing can arrive unto us. To be faithful on these occasions doth far transcend all speculations. If you still complain of cross accidents; if you don't hide your self from the eyes of men; if you love not poverty and contempt, and the things of this world have still some hold upon you; thou art not annihilated, and God hath not wrought the marvels of his love in thy heart.

Hearing sung in the Church these words of the Psalmist, Intoto corde meo exquisivi Te; I have sought Thee, O Lord, with my whole heart; it seemed to me, that our blessed Saviour answer'd me interiourly, Thou hast made a fair search after me every where; but thou wilt not find me any where on Earth, but there where I have been in the stations of my mortal life; in solitude and silence, in poverty and sufferings, in persecution and reproaches, in crosses and annihilation. The Saints sind me in Heaven in the splendors of Glory, and Joys inessable; but this is after they have sound me on Earth in Distraces and Pains I am through-

throughly convinc'd of this Truth, and humbly thank our bleffed Saviour, for making it fo clear unto me; and I befeech his infinite goodness so to imprint it in my heart, that I may practice it

without delay.

Alas! how long shall I behold the excellency of humiliations by Divine Irradiations darted into my Soul, and practice them fo little? Divine Jesus! take from me this rebellious heart, if it refuse to be conformable to you in your annihilations, open my breaft, and take it from me; for I had rather have none at all, and die, than have a heart that has other Maxims and Affections than what you have taught me. Omy beloved lesus! I do not in this desire cruelty to my self, but a fignal favour. The eternal Father who beheld you hanging on the Cross with complacency, will not be offended with this bloody spectacle.

O my Jesus! what a love have I for your Cross and humiliations! The view of their beauty, so well-pleasing to your eternal Father, does at present so ravish and transport me, that I shall become as it were a Fool, I shall lose my fenses, and speak I know not what; unless, dear Jesus, you put a stop to your Divine motions, and eclipse those Heavenly Rays which present to my view fufferings and humiliations fo ami-

able.

I have a particular Devotion to make a Litany of Jesus in all his humiliations; and when I feel a repugnancy to the practice of annihilation and felf-denial, I find great encouragement by reciting it. D4

fefus,

fesus, poor and abject, fesus, unknown and despised,

Jesus, hated, calumniated, and persecuted, Jesus, abandon'd by men, and tempted by

the Devil,

fesus, betray'd, and sold at a vile price, fesus, blamed, accused and condemned unjustly.

fesus, array'd with a shameful Garment,

Jesus, buffetted and mocked,

Jesus, reputed a Fool, and to have a De-

. Fesus, scourged in a bloody manner, being bound with Cords,

Jesus, thought worse of than Barrabas, Jesus, exposed naked with Insamy,

Jesus, crowned with thorns, and saluted with scoffs,

fesus, sorrowful to death,

Jesus, oppressed with injuries, pains, and bumiliations,

Jesus, affronted, spit upon, and despightfully used,

Jesus, charged with your Cross and our

Jesus, crucified between two Thieves, Jesus, dishonoured before men, and thought as nothing,

O good fesus! who hast suffered for the love of me an infinity of disgraces and humiliations above my comprehension; imprint powerfully in my Soul an esteem and love of them, that I may practise them by your example.

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CHAP. XIV.

That a Soul espousing Jesus Christ, esponses also his Cross and Sufferings.

The infinite Wisdom of God has condescended to espouse the lowness of our human Nature, by his Incarnation. This same human Nature hath espous d the Cross, Sufferings, Abjections, Death; and when a Soul espouses Jesus Christ, she contracts an eternal Union with all these during her Pilgrimage. O happy Alliance! She is married to Jesus, and Contempts and Sufferings are the Dowry. O precious Riches! If she love her Beloved indeed, she ought to have a tender affection to the gifts she prefents to him at the Espousals, because she gives

them, and he much values them.

O my Soul! being thus espoused to Jesus Christ, behold then how strictly thou art bound and engaged to him; for hereafter thou must suffer pains of body, griefs of mind, affronts and injuries; thou must be well content with humiliations, love disgraces, and make sport for others; thou must be content to be thought but unconstant by Devotes, and of little understanding by worldly persons; thou ought'st not to be discourag'd at bad successes, and thereupon drink deep of the Cup of humiliations, whether thou be in fault, or not; to be content to see others advanced, and willingly embrace a low condition. O my Soul! this engagement may terrific thee; but take courage, thou canst

42 The Interiour Lib. 1. do all things, through Christ strengthening thee.

Jesus Christ was prædestinated from all Eternity to sufferings and abjections, by the Decree of his Heavenly Father, to satisfie for our sins. And 'tis certain that all the Friends of God are prædestinated to be conformable to Jesus Christ, and so are prædestinated to sufferings, to satisfie God offended, and repair his Glory. Whosoever therefore resuses sufferings and humiliations, forsakes the way of the Prædestinate, for doubtless, by how much the more a Soul participates of the states of the life of Jesus, so much the more is she in God's savour, being more conform to the great Exemplar of those who are prædestinated to Life eternal.

Crosses and humiliations are best for Christians, and nothing does them more hurt than temporal Prosperity. O my God! burn, kill, mortise, disgrace, debase, crucisie me. otherwisel shall not have your face and savour, nor be numbred among your Friends. Make me wise in good earnest, to the end I may walk in your ways, that I may have a love for crosses and humiliations, that my heart may not be at

reft, till it reft there, as in a Centre.

I should never have believed, if experience did not make it evident, that a Soul can be brought to such a state by the conduct of Grace, as to rejoyce exceedingly to be plung'd in all sorts of m series. But these joys are so pleasant, and so sweet, that after a relish of their goodness, all things upon Earth seem nothing to them. A Soul then much wonders at her self,

to

Christian.

Lib. 1. to be terrified so much with the fight of abjections, feeing now they feem to her a Coelestial Paradice; and, next to Heaven, she desires no other: for she knows that Jesus Christ enjoy'd on Earth both these Paradices, that of Glory in Heaven, and this of Humiliations on Earth. She knows, that in the Paradice of Glory, the shall be glorified of God; the knows, that in the Par radice fhe conceives to be in Croffes and Abiections, God is glorified by Her. This is that which makes her have fuch an effeem and love for fufferings.

She thinks it a punishment to part with this Paradice; and the cannot fufficiently lament the blindness of men, who hunt after Honours and Preferments, of which the has no finall abhorrency. She fees clearly, that those advanced to Honours, commonly feek their own Glory: but by felf-denial and abjections we aim at the Glory of God; And therefore, laying most to heart the Glory of God, she falls in love with

humiliations. A Soul once enlightned with these irradiations, if the refuse abjections and sufferings, is very faithless, and deserves to be in the world without crosses and humiliations, which is the most formidable chastisement that can happen to us upon Earth.

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CHAP. XV.

That the experience of God's goodness to us, does annihilate us powerfully.

Et us not imagine we have the Spirit of fuffering and true humility, because we are affected with the thoughts and fentiments thereof, for we can only know it affuredly in the effective occasions. O how rare a thing is it to be wholly crucified to the things of this life! Nature must pay dear to purchase this Jewel. Tis not because the fruits are not sweet, which are indeed to ravishing, that no other sweetness in the world may be compared to it; infomuch that those Souls who have once tasted thereof, ere, as I may fay, daily mounted on the Crofs, as a Tree of Life.

Search for sweetness where you please, you will never find it so full as in the bosom of the Gros; all other sweetness is but superficial and fleeting; this is folid, permanent, and efficacious. But this a Soul cannot know by thoughts only, and sentiments thereof, but by the real effects of suffering Some Souls are as St Cordula, in whom the weakness of Nature was so strong, that she hid her self to escape Martyrdom; but the power of lesus Christ made her a little after discover her self, and lay down her life for his

.There's a wonderful frailty in human Nature, but the power of Grace in man is marvellous; Lib. 1.

the fight of One, makes us tremble for fear; but beholding the Other, we are encouraged by hope. Humility, and confidence in God, are two Virtues very necessary to man, who left to himself is all weakness, and is not strong but by the Grace of Jesus Christ, in whom poor, humble Souls arrive to their Crowns of Glory, and he is also crowned by them: for they cannot conquer the World and Nature but by Him, and this puts eternal Crowns upon his Head. The Crowns which the Saints wear on their heads, belong not to them, as if they had gain'd them by their own abilities, but to Jesus Christ, the Crown of the Blessed in Heaven; Jesus Corona Sanstorum omnium.

O dear Jesus! I am well pleas'd with your sweetness and consolations, and with the moderation you use towards me, in trying me only with small afflictions, as well knowing my weak ness would be over-whelm'd with a torrent of sufferings. I am pleas'd with those sensible influences you insuse into my Soul in Devotions; for though they be evident signs of my weakness, yet they are assured effects of your amiable Providence, to strengthen my frailty against temptations. Glorisie then in the depth of my Misery the riches of your Mercy.

When a Soul calls to mind her imperfections, and inclination to evil, God thinks upon her, and supplies her with his assisting Graces. When the forgets her miseries and corruptions, God also forgets her; for he loves not Vanity, but Verity. For this reason the most usual exercise of a Soul ought to be to endeavour for a perfect

fight

fight of her imperfections. This is an Altar on which we facrifice all felf-conceits, and defire of our proper excellence, to do homage to the fovereign Perfection and infinite Majesty of God. This Altar ought to be every day pre-

pared.

What corrections and reproofs we may receive from others, are not to be thought full of passion and exaggeration; yea, they come from our greatest Enemies: for they are less than our sinsand corruption, the source where-of is so profound, that no Creature can fathom it, but God alone. O what a blindness is it then to complain!

CHAP. XVI.

To be content with abjection after our faults, repairs the injury to God, and makes up our ruins.

You know my last inconsideration. This fault has made me see very well my extreme misery, and the little strength my Soul hath on such occasions. I see, methinks, the depth of my weakness, and know how little I am mortified, and how active my passions are yet in me.

God of his mercy grant, that by this fault I may see my Nothing, my weakness, my inclinations to evil, more clearly than formerly. I was miserable, and I did not know it; I was trailty it self, and I did not perceive it: but

acknowledge my vilenes, tho' I cannot

athom the depth thereof.

I am well-pleas'd that this fault happen'd presence of my Friends, who will therenow what I am. It much displeases me to offended God, by being so faithless to his ces; but I joy in this, that I am well-pleas'd the my humiliation. Tis a good hap to be deseed in the esteem of others, and does relish weet to such who desire to repair the injury hey have done to God, by sinning against him. To be powerfully convinced of our pure Nothing, and great Frailty, is the prosit we ought to make of our impersections. How prositable is the discovery of my misery to me, seeing it makes clear unto me all these verities!

This is the truth of it, I am nothing but infirmity and corruption, and more than I can comprehend. And for the love I ought to have for Truth, by a voluntary acquiescence I love and adore Divine Providence, which has brought me to the sight of my own Nothing. I acknowledge my self to be miserable, and am pleas'd the world should know it, and use me ac

cording to this verity.

Tis true also, that we ought not to complain of whatsoever injury is done us by word or deed, for 'tis always less than we deserve. 'Tis the Law of Christianity, and a great truth, that we ought to love abjection, Jesus having loved it by his Father's order, and he is the grand exemplar we must imitate.

Tis true also, that after our failings we ought to comfort our selves with the love of abjection,

and

The Interiour Li and make use of our infirmity to please of Just as when a Ship is broken by a Tem we get some sharter'd Plank to save us to perithing.

Tis true also, that fince this lapse I perce, better than ever the Bounty, the Power at Mercy of God towards me; and all the Divine Persections appear unto me beaming forth more splendors of Glory. Just as the Moon never makes more evident the dependance she has up-

on the Sun, than in Eclipses.

Tis true also, that a Soul sensible of her infirmities, is content with her Talent, without disquieting her self to attain the perfections of great Saints, whereo she acknowledges her self unworthy And if God be pleased to communicate unto her great Graces, she will not grow proud, as well knowing her own weakness, but rejoyce in this, that God thereby may be more honour'd.

Tis true also, that being convinced of her own unworthiness, she has no confidence in her self, but in God alone, to whom entirely she gives up her self, to deal with her as he pleases in Mercy or Justice

She wonders not to see her self lest and abandon'd to sin, because she knows she deserves no better, and then blesses the Divine Mercy, for not dealing with her according to her Me-

rits.

Tis true also, that a Soul grieving to have dispeas'd God, would be content to be really reduc'd to her first Nothing, i such was the Divine pleasure. For, though she knows, being

so brought to Nothing; she cannot be capable to please God, or enjoy him; notwithstanding such is the love she has for the Divine Will, that she would have that done, though she

perifh.

To acknowledge, and be content with our own baseness, is one of the greatest mercies God can do for a Soul. For hereby the draws Salvation from Perdition, as God knows how to advance his Glory by our fins. A Soul thus en-lightned, is content to be fet on the Dunghil of her miseries, surrounded with humiliations for her faults, as fob was with afflictions: and behold ng her felf as it were the Queen of Infirmities and Abjections, the's pleas'd therewith, feeing the may thereby honour and magnifie the Divine Goodness. It a Soul be miserable by falling into fin, fhe is rich in possessing the Treafure of humiliation after her failings. But this is a truth hidden to most men, who do not difcover this advantage. They are poor, and yet have a Treasure in their Field, which they may have for digging.

Jestis, poor and abject for love of me, leave me not to my self; list up my Soul after her fall, and g ve her some of that Cordial Water, which is call'd the love of Abjection, that chases away the vain vapours of self-love, by which the Soul is darken'd, and loses courage. Gloriste your power in my infirmities; be pleas'd to condescend so far, as to receive me returning into the arm; of your Mercy, and grant I may die unso my self, that I may live in your Em-

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braces.

Lib. 1. The Interiour 50

Methinks, dear Jesus, I already feel your tenderness unto me; your divine love vouchsafes me a relish of the sweets of Paradice; my eyes are bath'd in tears of contentment; my heart is dilated; and love does firmly unite me to you. Wherefore do you vouchsafe the kis of Peace fo foon to fuch a Wretch as I am? Why do you not leave me in bitterness of Soul, and trouble of Spirit, as a just chastisement for my fins? Your Mercy will not so deal with me, but by wonderful preventions of love, in the midft of my infirmities you redouble your favours and consolations. O that I was all love, to serve you wholly by way of gratitude! I would have all the world to see my Infidelities, to the end your mercy may thine more glorious.

I know that the fight of my fin had so frozen my heart, as in a manner to make me liveles : but, Omy Jesus, you have provided an excellent remedy, feeing the flames of divine love have fet me all on fire to do your will. 'Tis a great favour to be in this temper of Soul; but, dear Jesus, stay not here, visit my heart again with the feelings of your humiliations, that your inscrutable abjections may be its centre, and render it in some sort conformable to yours: and do this miracle of your Grace, that this faithless heart may become a divine heart, by the infinite merit of your most precious Blood.

mer prover in my infimities; he pleas de condeicend to far, as to receive me remembry troubs arms of your Mercy, and grant I may . TARY my (ell that I may have in your Em-

CHAP. XVII.

Considerations upon the vilenes of this cor-

How is a Soul pleased to know that her body must return to dust! This humiliation is the object of her complacency. When the illustrations of a Divine Light clear up the understanding, then she knows that persection consists in a tendence to humiliation, wherein she meets with the exaltation of God by the admirable contrivance of the Divine Wisdom.

O dust and ashes! you may be terrible to worldly Souls, but I am sure you bring joy to those who (walking by the light of Faith and conduct of Grace) love dearly the interests of God, and life eternal. The loss of worldly Interests, Hohour, Contentment, is painful to Nature, too much attached to her self: but a Soul elevated by Grace, rejoyces at the loss of her own interests, to advance God's glory.

A Soul ought to be well-pleas'd that her body shall be crumbled to dust, and (as it were) reduced to nothing, to exalt the Glory of God, and glorisie his justice. A holy person much wondred how the Saints, who are powerful with God, kept their bodies so long entire, not obtaining that they might be humbled by putresaction; because they knowing the inestimable value of humiliation, which most glorisies God, ought, as it seems, to have procur'd it to their bodies.

The Interiour Lib. 1.

bodies. But if God think best to glorisie himself by preserving them from corruption, his Divine Will is, and must be, the Rule of their desires.

Sometimes I have defired death as amiable, because it would give me free access to enjoy God; but at present I have the spirit of annihilation. This annihilation is a state above that of death, and by it we offer a perfect sacrifice. A Soul which seeks the Glory of God, desires death to enter into this perfect annihilation. What is most horrible in Death, paleness, deformity, noisonness, putretaction, pleases her best, for these are companions of a pertect annihilation, to humble her as much as possible. O death! how lovely art thou to such a Soul!

Tis a strangerhing; that the fire of Divine Love burns no brighter in our hearts, upon the frequenting of the Sacraments. Oftentimes we exercise our selves twice a day in mental Prayer, sometimes by holy Conferences, daily Lectures and Considerations. Now I think the cause of this is, that we are sad, dejected with abjections, which so chills the heart, that the fire of Divine Love is stifled thereby: but when once humiliation is a joy unto us, the heart presently becomes enslamed.

My Soul having a great degust of this life, feels a wonderful defire of death; she never was more sensible than now of her Captivity and Prison in this mortal body. She sighs after the liberty to see God, and enjoy him without any disturbance whatsoever: for all created things do divert this happy exercise, in which consists her selicity. Being a Prisoner in this Body,

Christian.

Lib. 1. 53 Body, the is yet in darkness and diffractions, by eating, fleeping, several affairs and accidents. O how is the crucified in being deprived of the full Embraces of her Beloved! Quis me liberabit de corpore mortis bujus? This made St. Paul earnestly defire to be freed from the Prison of this mortal body.

I admire the happiness of those who die in our Lord; and do wonder at the blindness of of such who paffionately desire this present life, and are taken up so much with the care of the Body, Goods, Employments, which are fo many impediments of our converse with God, and Christian Perfection. O how importunate is fenfuality with us, and yet how contemptible is every thing that is not God! We ought not to be discomforted at the loss of temporal things, because thereby some chains of our Captivity are broken: Much less ought we to be troubl'd to fee our Body, the Prison of our Soul, to weaken by degrees, and threaten death. Take courage; we shall soon see our desires accomplish'd, and shortly we shall enjoy God in full pessession.

This state of desires and languishings after God, is a state whereby we honour him as our final happiness: and being so, he deserves by reason of his excellence, that we should continually figh after him. Such as have no love for their final end, make no matter of it, and give too much evidence, that they find their repose in fomething elfe, which is a most dreadful diforder. But confidering our happiness by death, methinks I fee nothing more lovely than croffes and abjections; which can only refresh a Soul

E 3

Divine

panting

Lib.1. The Interiour panting after the full possession of God, and fometimes fo content with it, that the forgets the pain of her banishment; seeing her self in a state wherein she may glorifie God in so tranfcendent in a manner; which is what the chiefly defires, aspiring to enjoyment, without having regard to her proper satisfaction.

CHAP. XVIII.

Considerations upon the natural inclinations we have to evil.

Stone held in the Air, if let go, falls naturally to the ground by its own weight: and 'tis no more matter of wonder, when we fall into imperfections. If God leave us to our sclves, we are presently in our own nothing, weakness and infirmity. And if the Grace of God was not very great unto us, we should fall more often.

They may be thought valiant, who bear up stoutly against the blast of strong temptations. Alas! take us at the belt, we are as frail as Glafses on a Cupboard: If some are sooner broken, tis because they are more used, and found in the hand of an ill manager. Those that stand still on the Cupboard, if they had reason, would not brag of their strength, but only acknowledg, that they have not been tryed by occasions.

When the Grace of God keeps us from falling we ought not to take complacence therein, as if we were better than others by reason of such Animage of

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Divine Favours; but our content ought to be in the good pleasure of God, who is so munisicent to his Creatures, yea, the most unworthy. To be thus pleas'd only with God's will, is also very necessary, when it is God's pleasure to leave a Soul to combat with some singular impersection a long time without victory. For it being the will of God to leave a Soul thus to fight it out, she ought to be as well content as if she was more elevated by Grace, seeing in this state fhe meets with the Divine pleasure, which is the object of her complacency. Infomuch that the Soul has no more inclination for one Grace than another, but indifferent to all, being content to have her faults made known, to glorifie God by the love of abjection. Secret faults do us the greatest hurt; when manisested, if we make good use of it, they may bring no small advantage to us.

I have at present a wonderful distast of this Life, which is hardly a Life, but a continual Death, because it deprives us of knowledg and and love in perfection. O how this mortal life is a great punishment, and full of Crosses! Here we sin, here we forget God, and run a hazard to lose him eternally. Love here finds little nourishment, being sed with slender knowledg, sometimes much clouded, and continual propensions to evil. Dear Saviour! when will you deliver me from the body of this death? This was the desire of St. Paul, which I take the courage to make, being so much out of love with this miserable life.

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Interiour Christian.

BOOK II.

Of the Supernatural Life, which is the Life of all true Christians.

CHAP. I.

The Idea or description of the Supernatural Life.

Vole conduct of human reason, which is the light of Philosophers. Faith is the light of Christians, which teacheth us to renounce the ratiocinations of carnal prudence, to follow in simplicity a Jesus Crucified. To observe the Commandments of God, as to their substance, is to keep our selves in the bounds of human reason, to which they are conformable: but to observe them in an elevated manner, so as our obsedience may be meritorious; to follow Divine Inspirations, in loving Contempts, Poverty, Mortifications, and embrace Evangelical Counsels:

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selves, and live a Supernatural Life.

See then what I understand by a Supernatural and Christian Life. To live Christianly, is to live according to the Spirit of Jesus, according to the Grace of Jesus, the New Man. A Grace far different from the Grace given to old Adam, in the state of Innocency. A Life more holy and more eminent, and which carries along with it different effects, and contrary proceedings.

The Grace of Adam did enable him to use the Greatures virtuously, and by the holy use of Pleasures, Honours, and Riches, to arrive to his final happiness. This was the way of the state of Innocency; from whence being fallen, the infinite Wisdom hath sound out another way quite different, which is the way of privations, of the Gross, of sufferings, of humiliations; in which Jesus Christ marched from the first moment of his Incarnation, to his last breath on the Gross.

This is the true foundation of the Christian Life; this is the true Principle, this is the only way, out of which there is no Salvation, or Perfection. Worldly men, and too many Christians, are ignorant of it; and not knowing supereminentem Scientiam fesu Christi, this supereminent Science of Jesus Christ, they know nothing as they ought, because they know not Jesus Crucified. This Doctrine is harsh to flesh and blood, and wholly contrary to the Spirit of the World. But the Saints have practised it, and I must walk the same way, except I will be very faithless, and renonnce the Spirit of Jesus Christ.

O my God! I will become a New Man in my Understanding, Will, Life, Proceedings; and to this end I will change my Doctrine, my Principles and Maxims. I will deny my self, and take up my Cross to follow Jesus; I will be content with Poverty, Contempt, and Mortifications; my inclinations shall tend this way for the future, and sufferings for your sake shall be delights unto me. And if I do otherwise, it shall not be through wilfulness, but human weakness. O good Jesus! give me to live with you a crucified Life on Earth, that you may make me partaker of your glorified Lite in Heaven. There is a time for all things. This is a life of sufferings, the other of Enjoyments.

Oblindness of Christians, not to see the excellency of the Christian Life! Some are busine to make themselves sit for worldly Employments; some are all for Science; others for War, &c. but sew make it their chief work to become good Christians, as being of little value with them. O the ignorance of Christians, not to see that all things besides are pure

vanity!

orbits randibo CHAP. II.

Of the high esteem we ought to have of the Christian Life.

ESUS on the day of his Ascension was elevated to the highest Heavens, where he sits at the right hand of God: upon which my Soul rejoye'd with her Saviour in admiration of his Tryumphs, and breathing out after him a thoufand Praises and Benedictions with all Saints and Angels, found motions in my felf to follow him, not to Heaven, but to Mount Calvary, not in his Tryumphs but Humil ations. O my Tesus! (said she) that I was elevated above my felf; that I could so keep Nature under, as to live e Supernatural Life, and tryumphing over human Reason, and natural Maxims, I may repose quietly in the Bosom of your Cross, and there live happily in that content the world knows not, with that peace which passes all understanding.

Iknow that all the Patriarchs which you led in tryumph, were justly ravished with joys unspeakable; Rut if you please to raise me by Grace to a supernatural Life, I will not envy their happiness. They are elevated to Enjoyment; but as for me, I am for Privation, sor Contempt and Miseries, which seem to me, being suffered for your sake, dear fesus, more delicious than Paradice. If I persevere with Pidelity in a crucified Life, I will not trouble my self about the life of Glory. But, alas! my frequent falls and sailings, by reason of

CHAP.

my weakness and inconstancy, make me desire that

Life, where is no fault or imperfection.

The ascension of a Soul to Heaven, Ohow delightful is it! the ascension of a Soul to a supernatural Life, O'ris admirable! How happy are they who are acquainted with it! O my God! clear up the eye of Faith in me, that I may behold the wonders you work in Souls in this valley of tears. What if I fay, That a Sout is as happy and try wonphant in going out of her felf, for the love of the Cross to embrace abjection, as in going out of the World to possess Heaven? So many fallies as the makes out of her felf for the love of the Cross, are so many glorious ascensions, which delight even God himfelf, the Saints and Angels beholding it with admiration. The fame Faith which opens my eyes to fee Jefus poor and abject, does affure me that the triumph of a Soul in humiliations, is no less admirable than Routly are Jefus Christ, abject and cyrold ni

What can be done more to make us have the highest esteem of this supernatural Life, when we see God the Father, among so many possible ways, hath from all eternity chosen this for his Son, while he liv'd upon Earth? How did his well-beloved Son, who is infinitely wife, leave the bosom of his Father with joy, toembrace this life with love and affection! How did the holy Spirit, who reposed in his breast as the centre of his more hoble sentiments, carry him on by most powerful inspirations to the Cros, Contempts, Poverty, Humiliations, during the whole course of this mortal life?

What other way can those who belong unto Christ take to make themselves conformable to him, but by treading in his steps ? But when our bleffed Saviour liv'd in the world this wonderful life, Mundus eum non cognovit, the world knew him not, because he lay hid in poverty, pains and fufferings. In like manner those who live a life most conformable to him, the world knows them not; for we must have eyes cleared by Divine Irradiations to discover the excellency of this state. And yet so much Glory and Grandeur is enveloped in the shadows of this Life, that they who live it, do most glorifie God, and exalt his Honour.

Take courage then, and let us tend to the perfection of Divine Love, which we shall find in the folid practice of this supernatural Life. Let others do what they please, we will follow the conduct of God's holy Spirit, and march froutly after Jesus Christ, abject and orucified.

O what happy advantages enjoys that Soul, to whom God is pleas'd to give a view of this supernatural Life, a Life hidden and unknown to worldly men! Tis of more worth than all the Treatures of the Earth. We ought daily (according to our abilities) to examine our selves, to the end to purific our hearts from all affections that tend not to this supernatural Life. It relides in the superjour part of the Soul; and therefore we must not wonder, if the inferiour part has degusts and aversions

We must expect, that Nature, Sense, Friends, the World, and ordinary Christians, will keep West

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a noise, and trouble our ears with many Arguments against it: But to all this it is enough to answer in few words with St. Blandina, Christiana sum, Christiana sum; I am a Christian. Let us fay to fuch who endeavour to divert us, I have undertaken to lead this supernatural Life; I will never abandon it, maugre all the contradictions of worldly Maxims, and the repugnances of fensual Nature. I know, to become a perfect Christian, I must be turn'd up-side down, destroy'd, annibilated, according to my natural inclinations, bate in a manner all that the world naturally loves, Riches, Honours, Pleasures, (yea, though innocent;) and love what the world naturally hates, Poverty, Contempt and Sufferings. This is a great attempt, but we have powerful helps; for we can do all thingst brough Christ strengthening us.

CHAP. III.

That we ought (with St. Paul) to convert our selves wholly to God.

Am now resolv'd in good earnest to convert my self wholly to God, to be taken solely with his Divine Beauty, and Infinite Goodness, forsaking all Creatures, which heretofore have too much taken up my time and affections.

O my God! deal with me as you did with your Apostle; strike me down to the ground; humble me; make me blind to all things but to You, who are in the interiour of my heart, beaming

beaming forth Lights, which discover sufficiently your Divine presence. This makes me ask you, O my God, what you will have me to do? And methinks you answer, That this manifestation of your presence in me, should make such an extraordinary impression on me, as to change my life, and conform my self wholly to your Divine will

and pleasure

Behold, it seems to me, this is what you would have me to do. First, Not to persecute the sentiments and inclinations I have to a Christian Life, by taking part with the structings of old Adam is me. St. Paul persecuted Jesus Christ, in persecuting the Primitive Christians; and I also persecute the same Jesus, when I stifle the motions of Grace in me, and will not suffer my Soul to hive his life, which he did lead here for me to follow. Pardon me, good Jesus; I will no longer persecute you by stifling your holy Inspirations. I defire to be a Christian, and your Disciple. I will profess Christianity in the sace of the Sun, and only be asham'd to live after the Law of old endam.

To be a Christian, this is my Glory, this is my Life, this is my Delight. Poverty, Contempts, Pains, Humiliarions, I will no more be affraid of you, but make much of you, seeing

Jefus hath loved you even to death.

To live this Life, we must become blind, and have no other light than what the rays of Faith afford us Por Nature cannot teach us the Grandent Excellence, and Eminency of Christianity. St "sat affect his Conversion differed a thousand hardships, He was whipt, bamish'd, despis'd, mock'd,

mocked, imprison'd, rormented, us'd as if he was the fifth and off-scouring of the world: which is as much as to fay, St. Paul after his Conversion was a Christian to death, no. thing could deter him from living the life of Jefus Chrift, aller appet su garatar d'in tax

Let us then, O my Soul, be true Christians, that is, let us be content to live in Sufferings, Persecutions, Mortifications, and the Ignominies of the Gross of Jesus Christ, Let us embrace the wisdom of the Word Incarnate, and become as Fools in the eyes of the world, who perfecute true Christians; that is, those who die to themselves, and all things else, to live to Jesus. Poor Christian Life, little art thou known whow ill art thou treated in the world! Thou dwell A in the lips of many, but few afford

thee a place in their heart.

I am fully persuaded, that a Soul truly conof God is a perfect union with his goodness; that such a union implies a universal detachment from the Creature; that fuch a detachment cannot be got without the profession of Virtues, and among the reft, Poverty and Selfdenial, by which we are interiourly difengaged from earthly things; and exteriourly, when God pleases, contentedly suffer miseries, sickness, loss of Goods, and whatever the world naturally abhors as evil; but by the work of Grace are for our greater good, because they advance our union with God.

When we abound with Riches and Honours, welive in a continual fear of having too great

The Interiour Lib. z. 66 an affection for them; but in sufferings a Soul possesses a stronger assurance of Divine Love. Nothing but Grace can teach us these verities. and a greater Grace can only make us relish and practice them: the weight of our natural inclinations still hindring us from rifing to fo great Perfection.

When we give up our selves to God, with resolutions daily to advance in Virtue, we can more gafily conceive what this perfection is. than practice it. However, let us take courage, nothing is impossible to God, and we shall find (doubtless) this Jewel by a perfect abnegation; that is, possessing nothing, not the very means of ferving God, but with a spirit of refignation To follow Jefus naked on the Crofs, we must divertour felves of all Creatures, that we may be folely united to him.

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Yea, dear Jesus, my desire is only to be for you, my resolution is to serve you, and in what manner you please, be it by action, or by suffering or contemplation. I will be attached to nothing but You; my desire is to be distengag'd from all Creatures, to find You, and posses You, as my only happiness.

defial, by which we are interiorally likengage ! from earthly thing, and exteriously, when God pleafes, com encedly fusier up brice, fish neis, lots of Goods, and whatever the world. naturally abhors as evil; but by the work of Grace are for our greater good, because they advance our union with God.

When we abound with Riches and Honours, " TAHE na continual fear of having too great

been, to comb WX sc. QA HO

Behold, my soul, thou are capaged, and this

thee, came of bur love thee; what a fool have

Of the Alliance we must make with the holy Folly of the Cross.

A feer many illustrations of Grace, which have cleared up to me the beauty of the facred Folly of the Crois; after many proposals and reviews: I have at last espous dit; saying with fervour the same words which Christ us d to his Spouse in the Canticles; Sponsabo te in aternum: My Friend, my Spouse, my

Sister, I have espoused thee for ever. entio on

Methinks I say these words, for ever, but yet saintly, my infinite trailines, making me searful I may become an inconstant Lover. Notwith-standing, I say for ever with a real heart, in hope, that by virtue of that immense Love whereby the Divinity hath for ever espoused our human Nature, and this same Humanity hath espossed the Cross, sufferings and abjections, our blessed saviour will vouchsafe me some part of the Grace of this Divine Alliance, to enableme to walk his way, and live his life, in annihilation, humiliations and self-denial.

Let us then, O my Soul, live this life of the Son of God; any other life is but a real death. Ious hath elpoused the folly of the Cross, and tis his will? I shall do so likewise; and shall not I do his will? O my God! I am content to be deprived of what the world loves and desires; leave but me the tolly of the Cross, I shall be rich

68 The Interiour Lib.2. rich enough. O amiable folly! he who knows

thee, cannot but love thee: what a fool have I

been, to embrace thee no fooner!

Behold, my Soul, thou art engaged, and this engagement makes thee feartul: Quare trifting as anima mea, & quare conturbas me? But why, O my Soul, art thou disquieted? Tis true, for the future thou must sutter injuries, affronts, pains of body, troubles of mind, be content with annihilations and abjections; be pleas d with disgraces; be the play game of Worldlings, and esteemed as a Fool; yea, to be ill spoken of by some Devotes: Thou must not be cast down with ill successes, whether thou be in fault, or no: Thou must drink deep of the Cup of humiliations; see others exalted, and love to be humbled; yea, though by spiritual Desolations. Take courage, O my Soul, we can do all things through Christ strengthening us.

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Frontess the greatness of my engagement would have quite east me down, being sensible of my own wonderful weakness; if I had not been supported by the infinite mercy and goodness of God. Wherefore I must love the Cross, which I have espouted for ever. I shall find my felf well-enough in this alliance, it I do but continue faithful; for the more I converse with it, I shall the more discover its Beauty; my fears will vanish, my passions will be appeared; and being in peace, my Soul will be enlarged, and melt in love towards this Spoule; which, tho

black, is wonderful comely.

If I love the Crois, it must needs be an effect of pure Grace, my own frailties bearing witness; but at present I find my self in great disposition

fition of love. O how weak is my Soul, when left to her felf! O how strong is she, when supported by Grace! O my Jesus! tis your love, and your example that makes me love the sacred folly of the Cross, which you have so dearly

loved, as to die in its embraces.

When I consider a God crucified, methinks I discover certain rays of Beauty, which make the horror of Mount Calvary feem wonderful amiable; and I can hardly be fatisfied with looking on this lovely object, and fay; O my fefus! how delightful is it to see the beauty of a God dying for men! This beauty indeed is not in his facred vifage, for that was all disfigured with blood and buffertings; but in that God was pleased to die on the Crofs for men, and the eternal Father took complacence in this beauty. I cannot explicate what is this beauty, unless by the effect it produces in me; for verily my Soul fees nothing besides this to captivate my fight: Jesus only in his humiliations and fufferings on the Crofs, commands my eyes and my heart.

When I consider the other states of the life of Jesus; his Incarnation, Nativity, Solitude, Conversation, and the like; I find in them a beauty invites me to behold them with delight, because I discover certain irradiations to beam from the obscurities and humiliations of these states, which are very ravishing. I often say with my self, How lovely is the abjection of this state! How is the poverty of that admirable! And in all I perceive the beauties of a sacred Folly, which the infinite Wisdom would make use of, to confound the salse Maxims of worldly Prudence:

O what a favour have you in mercy done for me, O my God, to discover to me the beauty of this Divine Folly, which to worldly men seems nothing but deformity! But what abundance of Grace do you vouchsase me, by enabling me to make so strict an alliance with it! I have espous dit; I will live with it; I will die with it; and nothing shall ever divorce me from it.

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How we ought to conform our Interiour to that
of Jesus Christ.

Our Interiour ought to be conformable to that of Jesus Christ, that as his Members we may be governed and animated by his Spirit, that having part of his Grace as Christians, part of his light from his Doctrine, part of his inclinations to put us upon practice, we may be so transformed into Jesus, as to have a perfect union with him. And this is that wherein lies the excellency of a Christian; this is that which makes Christians indeed, and to do and suffer as becomes Christians

Tis a trange thing to see what little knowledge we have of the Christian lite. Some who
have lest Nature, to follow Grace, suppose it
confists in doing much for God, and for the
good of our Neighbour, by preaching, instructing, giving Alms, and such-like charitable exercises. This is good indeed; but we must form

the Interiour Christian, and then we shall do best for pohers what God calls us to undertaken of the

The Interiour confifts in Illustrations inward Teachings, Sentiments, and affections of the Soul. If those be high and elevated, the Interious is so likewise. But the Soul of Jesus had the most elevated illustrations possible of the excellency of Self-denial, Poverty, Pains, Abjections, and the Crois; and from thence a singular love and esteem for them. These irradiations and affections were insus'd into his most beautiful Soul, the first moment of his Incarnation, and continued to his last breath on the Crois.

The eternal Father, who by this New Adams would repair his Glory, which was obscur'd by Old Adam's fall, amongst the infinity of means which lay treafur'd up in the bosom of his Omniscience and Omnipotency, chose this of the Cross, which his Son (made Flest) embraced, cherished, loved, and put in execution all his life-time; esteeming Concempts, Crosses, Sufferings, as things great and excellent; preferring the interest of the Glory of his Father before the fatisfactions of his facred Humanity, which had a natural repugnance to them. By how much the more then that a Soul is partakar of the Divine Spirit and Interiour of the Son of God, by fo much the more the excems and loves the Crofs, and confequently does more glorifie God the Father. For, to suffer, is to make a continual Sacrifice of our Pleafures and Interests, uniming our felves to the defign the Son of God had by fuffering to repair the Glory of his Father. FA. Where

The Interiour . Lib. 2.

Wherefore, when a Soul ceases to value and love the Cross and Humiliations, she is no more conform to the Soul of Jesus, and so does not glorifie God the Father in a high manner: but when she seels in her self a high esteem and love of the Cross, she highly glorifies the eternal Father, who takes great delight in her, in that she

refembles his well-beloved Son. His beloved

When a Soul is enlightned with these irradiations, she sees her Glory is to be despised, because her Glory is to procure the Glory of God, which she does most by humiliations. She finds her delight to be in suffering, because her delight is to honour the eternal Father, which is best effected by this means. A faithful Soul will never part with an esteem and love of the Cross, as to the Interiour, because her desire is to please God, and we best please him by humiliations.

Letus well ground our selves in this exercise of the designs of God, who would have us conformable to his Son, and consequently to have a love for sufferings and abjections. Whatever disposes us to this conformity, ought to be precious to us; as, sew natural Talents, Sickness, ill successes, and the like. The Spirit of the World and Nature find therein their punishments the Spirit los Jesus Christ takes pleasure therein, and so advances a saithful Soul to Perfections of the particular and so advances a saithful Soul to Perfections of the particular and so advances a saithful Soul to Perfections of the particular and so advances a saithful Soul to Perfections of the particular and so advances a saithful Soul to Perfections of the particular and so advances a saithful Soul to Perfections of the particular and so advances a saithful Soul to Perfections of the particular and so advances a saithful Soul to Perfections of the particular and so advances a saithful Soul to Perfections of the particular and so advances a saithful Soul to Perfections of the particular and so advances a saithful Soul to Perfections of the particular and so advances a saithful Soul to Perfections of the particular and so advances a saithful Soul to Perfections of the particular and particu

faithful to the love of fufferings and abjections.
And we are not faithful hereing if we are not represent with those things that humble us, and saud which in a standard to the saud which the saud which the saud which the saud which is a saud which the saud which is a saud which the saud which is a sa

Lib. 2. Christian. 73
A right prospect of abjection and sufferings is

fupernatural and delicate, and requires time to bring it to perfection; and must be first tried in our selves, before we extend it to others.

As for my particular, when I fee a person in great misery and poverty, I am not much troubled at it, because I consider the real good that Soul may procure to her self by this abjection. On the contrary, I am in fear for those who are advanced to Honours, and have great natural abilities, for the difficulty they must needs find to curb the Spirit of Nature and the World, and bring them off from the love of these things, which are so powerful in them, and hinder in them the love of Jesus Christ.

Let us therefore remember, that the purity of Virtue confifts in a faithful tendance to abjection and suffering; and by how much a Soul is more saithful herein, the greater advancements she makes in Virtue. Abjection being as the centre of the Soul, the more she is humbled, the nearer she draws to her repose, and by consequence has a greater feeling of God in inward peace. A Peace that the World nor Nature can ever give us; a Peace that passeth all

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The Sublimity of the Christian Life.

at my ownered por try lam not much crou-TOthing but God madelman, poor, annihilated, facrificed, could honour God acsording to his greatness. The designs of the pternal Father to this end are admirable, full of Divine Wildom, of unspeakable Love and Mercy towards Man and most ardent Zeal for his own Glory. O the wonderful œconomy shae discovers is felf in all the mysteries of the Word Incarnate!

y: O the ineffable mystery of Jesus! By you the eternal Father is loved, glorified, honour'd, and his Justice facisfied to the utmost rigour. In this mykery is contain'd an inexplicable Commerce and Trafique of God the Father with his Son, the Interdition his Glory in the Saltation of mankind. The will of the eternal Father was, that his Son should be incarnate, circumcifed, poor, Contrid and crucified, and the Son of God in the chele staces of his dife, invended thereby to render to his Father all the humiliations, respects, love, and adoration, which were due unto him. These are the annihilations which so much elevate and exalt the Christian Reliligion; to these she owes her grandeur and excellence.

O amiable, eminent, and excellent Religion! how unknown art thou to wordly men, who tast no sweetness, but in sensual pleasures! Q CHAP. ChriChristian Religion! how art thou admirable! how art thou inestable! whose chief business is to employ your Children with the Divine Trassque of the eternal Father, with his Son Incarnate. When thy Heavenly Lights shine upon a Soul, she sees the deceit, the vanity, and pitiful baseness of the thoughts of those men who love not God, nor aim at his Glory. O my Soul! how wretched wilt thou make thy self, if thou sollow thy sensual appetite, and walk not in the ways of Jesus Christ! But this we cannot do of our selves, but by Grace and Power of the same Jesus, who is our hope, and only helper.

We ought to bear no less respect to the Maxims of a supernatural Life, than to Jesus Christ, who hath established them; seeing we ought to believe that they are full of Divine Wisdom, and inestable Sanctity. To have no esteem for poverty, contempt. and humiliations, is to undervalue the Wisdom of Jesus Christ. Some are so brutish, as to be led only by sensuality; others follow only the light of Reason and human Prudence: but neither of them know the excellency of Christianity, but such only who

are conducted by the light of Faith.

O Life supernatural! how sublime art thou! How dost thou so elevate a Soul, as to become blind to things here below, yea, to her self, and to see nothing but God in her by the rays of Grace. Be pleased, O Divine Spirit of Jesus, to bestow upon us some part of this holy life, which the world can neither receive, nor know:

Quem mundus non potest accipere, nec seit eum,

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as St. fohn testifies. The world cannot receive it, being wholly taken up with Creatures; nor can know it, being blinded with sensuality. What a malediction is this! But what a happiness is it to know and embrace this supernatural

life!

This was wrought in the hearts of the Apofiles, who return'd with joy to be found worthy to live this life; that is, to be whipt and despifed for the name of Jesus. Verily, if there was nothing to suffer here, I know not why we shou'd desire to live here. We should endeavour to imitate that great Saint who suffer'd a greater Martyrdom among Roses and Suavities, than by Racks and Tortures. Worldly pleasures are a kind of torment to a Soul that loves Jesus Christ crucified.

Let us take a resolution, O my Soul, not to be pleased but with the Cross; and when that does not relish, let us please our selves with our own annihilation, seeing the Creature is nothing in effect, but what she is in the sight of God. But she is no more in his eyes, than inasmuch as she is a Christian; and she is no more a Christian, than inasmuch as she loves this supernatural life. While then we are too sensible of a suffering condition, we have no great share of the spirit of Christianity; that is, of the spirit of Jesus, abject, suffering, and annihilated.

Grace. Be pleased, O Divine Spirit of Jesus, to be frow upon us some part of this holy life, which the world can neither receive, nor know:

Onem mundus non parest accipere, nee sein cum,

CHAP.

CHAP. VII.

There are divers degrees of this Supernatural Life.

OD has been very gracious to us, to draw I us out of nothing; but more gracious and merciful, in withdrawing us from fin, and the occasions of displeasing him: But the choicest of his favours is, to advance us from a common, to a supernatural Life: That is, when the eternal Father does lead us into the states of the mortal life of Jesus, by abjections, sufferings and annihilations; which is the choicest of his Mercies and Favours on Earth, because thereby we bring to him the greatest Glory.

A Soul is not all at once elevated to the perfection of this life. But as soon as she beholds the beauty thereof, being ashamed to be so much attached to worldly things, she is taken with the excellency of this admirable way, and begins to be mortified to her self and the world, aspiring after a prosound oblivion and contempt of all Creatures, and desiring to be imprivations, the better to curb her sensual inclinations, and practice Virtue. Thus the Soul proceeds in the

purgative way of this supernatural Life.

The Soul thus purged, advances to partake of the Divine Illuminations of this Life, and becomes in a manner clear-fighted thereby, her understanding receiving many illustrations and discoveries of its excellency and grandeur.

She fees the wonders couch'd in the mystery of Jesus, poor, suffering, and annihilated. She perceives the eminency of those fanctified Souls who have followed Jesus in his humiliations. She begins to apprehend, that a Soul which has no knowledge nor effeem of this life, is buried in darkness. She is amaz'd at the blindness of Christians, in being besotted on empty vanities. And lastly, the perceives that there is enjoyment in fuffering, and that by croffes and privations we come to union with God.

The Soul thus illuminated, enters into the Unitive state of this life, and tends to a continual union with God, whom the fees present in Her Interiour. Nothing can hinder this union, as long as the Soul finds enjoyment in fufferings. This proceeding of grace in a Soul is not extra-

ordinary,

God Behaves himself in a Soul, as a King in a Ringdom newly conquer'd, who kills and de-firoys all that oppose the establishment of his Dominion. Notwithstanding the Prince here-by seems to put all things in disorder, tis but to produce peace, and to rule without disturbance by the conquelt of his Enemies. God prodeeds in like manner: As foon as he enters into vock of all his Enemies by penetential rigour, to bring the Soul wholly to his Obedience.
Then he eltablishes the Maxims of his Policy, and convinces the Soul how good and just they are by the tollowing illustrations, midnative but

discoveries of its excellency and grandem. She

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First, That the greatest Treasure on Earth is, to have part of the Poverty of Jesus Christ.

Secondly, That the greatest Glory is, to be par-

taker of his abjections. The sale in the sale

Thirdly, That the greatest foy is, to suffer pains with him.

Fourthly, That the Life of Christianity is, to deny our selves, take up our Gross, and sollow festus. That when we cease to die to our selves, and crucisie our Lusts, we leave off to be Christians, and die in a manner to Christianity, because we lose the Spirit thereof.

Fifthly, I hat there's nothing more amiable, more precious, and more honourable in the world, than to imitate fesus poor and abject, seeing this state was most precious in the eyes of God bis fa-

ther.

Finally, The Soul being persuaded of these verities, which are in a manner evident unto her; the by the obscure light of Faith, has no love for any thing upon Earth, nor any pretensions but those of fesus Christ; and these were only to suffer, and he annihilated, so persett in his Person the designs of his eternal Father, by dying on the Cross.

Then she absolutely for sakes her self, to give her self up wholly to the Maxims and Spirit of Jesus Christ, uniting and conforming her self, as much as may be, to his states; and her thoughts are far different from others sentiments. And this is not to be wondred at, seeing St. Peter says of Christians, that they are Gens sancta, Genns elestion, regale Sacerdorium; a holy Nation, a chosen People, a royal Priesthood, to offer

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offer to God Sacrifices of good Odour; which is by crucifying themselves with Jesus Christ, who is a continual Sacrifice. O the sublime state of a Soul in this supreme degree of a supernatural life! Alas! the tentiments of Nature do too much take up our hearts, so that those of a supernatural life have little or no place in them. What a misery is this!

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The practice of a Supernatural Life.

This does not confilt in fole speculation; for we can never do it better, than when the occasions of abjection and contempt present themselves, to embrace them heartily, as the most necessary means to make us conformable to Jesus Christ.

God the Father cannot prædestinate us to be conformato the Image of his Son, but he must prepare forus from all Ecernity many occasions of contemptianth abjection, which time brings faith. Our fidelity lies in complying with these occasions, to follow Jesus with these occasions, to follow Jesus with these must be done; and Powers Iswill at Ill you how in must be done; tail accission to a very contempt of the country of the

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fom, abide there with delight, and then make upon our selves some short and sharp reflections. Restections that may form in us the Image of Jesus Christ, without any great trouble to our selves. These, when done to the purpose, are as so many powerful Thunderbolts to beat down our natural inclinations, and destroy the Maxims of human Prudence, according to which we commonly square our actions. Such Restections breath into us a supernatural wisdom, which gives us a relish of the proceedings of sesus Christ crucified, so little known by worldly men.

But perhaps it would be better to regard nothing but the infinite beauty of Jesus in the state of his abjections, without making any restections on our selves, or busying our selves with our own miseries; considering only the example of Jesus exposed to our view, and the power we receive from his grace to follow him. It is enough, if he vouchsafe to cast a glance of his Divine rays on our natural repugnances, to quell and conquer them. O my Jesus! I will regard you in your humiliations, and then you will look propitiously upon me, and that is sufficient. O Jesus, annihilated in your sufferings! make me, as it were, lost in my self, by suffering with you, that I may be absorpt in you, and by

you in God.

Shall the men of this world be more provident than the children of Light? What? shall they have a care of their affairs, and I neglect my business? I will enrich my self, as well as they, with my own ruins; and from my humiliations

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I will draw great aids and succours, to follow Jesus; for my resolution is to march after him

absolutely, without reserve.

To do any great matters in the ways of the world, we must have much Wealth, many Friends, and good success. To do great matters in the ways of God, it will suffice to be poor and despicable, to have Enemies, and ill successes: For the more a Soul suffers, the more she does great matters in God's service; the more she is deprived of the Creatures, the more is she enriched with the Creator. Therefore she must work as hard for poverty of Spirit and Self-denial, as worldly men do labour to enrich themselves according to Nature, and must employ all means and Motives to this effect. I will set down some of them,

'Tis a good Motive, or means, to renounce all Creatures, and our selves, by a spirit of denudation; Saying with great fervour and affection, Away Creatures; get hence from me, and leave a place in my heart for God alone

2. Tis a good Motive, to do this by a spirit of Poverty; for it is not possible to follow fesus poor and a ject, unless in due circumstances we be willing to leave all things for fesus sake, and become poor to follow him. Let us therefore be content to quit all things joyfully, and he gladto have nothing, to possess God himself alone.

^{3.} Tis a good Motive, to die to all things by a first of objection. What greater happiness is there.

O my Soul, than to live in humiliation, seeing this was the life of God upon Earth? To be despised with fesus, is a state of beatitude. Worldly Prospe-

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4. 'Tis a good Motive, to abandon all things by a spirit of oblation, sacrificing and annihilating our selves sincerely, to pay bomage to the Institt Majesty of God, with such a considence in him, so as to rely never more on any Creature. Quid enim mihi est in Cælo, aut à te quid volui super Terram, Deus cordis mei? O my God! shall any Creature take part of my heart with you, when all is yours? If it was possible to love you too much, I might give place to something else; but seeing I am infinitely below my duty in that particular, what Creature can pretend to have the least part with you?

CHAP. IX.

Of the liberty we enjoy by the exercise of the Supernatural Life.

Is wonderful to see the great liberty which a Soul enjoys by the exercises of a supernatural life. When the illuminations of this state irradiate a Soul throughly, she enters into a new region of light, full of Peace and Love, marvelous large and spatious, in which she lives in high union with God. A union which is not so liable to vicissitudes and disturbances as formerly; because accidental occurrences, as sickness, disgraces, &c. do not hurt such a Soul, by rea-

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fon they make no strong impression in her; and by consequence, being become less sensible, she is not easily diverted from the supernatural Ob-

iect of her love.

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Yea, such a Soul improves hindrances and divertisements to her greater recollection and increase of Divine Love; because in this state she is disengag'd from the Creature, and so freed from sear of miseries, which she can chearfully embrace, as the occasions of her happiness; whereby she enters into a perfect liberty, and

great purity of Virtue.

I could never well understand what that is, which is called Purity of Virtue; but now I see it is the state of a supernatural life, wherein the Soul lives no more in her self, and of her self, and for her self; but in God, and of God, and for God; being wholly separated from the Creatures, and united to God. Alas! how is this poor Soul afflicted to do things so much below her self, in this high condition! For oftentimes she must act according to her natural inclinations, and the dictates of pure reason; which affords her matter of sighs and languishings after her Beloved.

This is that which kindles in her breast an ardent desire to be dissolved, and leave this earthly Tabernacle; wherein by the common misery of mankind, she lives a life displeasing to her self; for being not wholly for God, as she desires, it seems to her a kind of death. And seeing the cannot continually live this supernatural life without vicissitudes, it is, as it were, a death unto her. A Death unknown, to sensual men,

of. O Jesus! deliver me from this life of mortality, seeing here I cannot live your life of purity, in comparison of which all other lives

are but death and corruption.

To see so clearly the excellencies of a life so lovely, and not to be able to live but little of it, considering my frailty, makes me resent my misery, and acknowledge, dear Jesus, how necessary your Grace is for me. O how great is the dependence which my Soul hath on your mercy! 'tis so mighty and essential dependence, that words cannot sufficiently express it. However, this comforts me herein, that it gives you all the Glory of the Interiour beauty in the Soul; which is a work more magnifies your Power, Bounty and Wisdom, than the whole outward work of the Creation. Your greatest wonders, dear Saviour, are secret and hidden.

A Soul that lives this supernatural life above her inclinations, does more set forth the great power of God, than to elevate the Heavens above the Earth; for this is as miraculous, as to elevate the Earth above the Heavens. This makes me, O my God, desire to live this blessed life, that I may thereby bring greater Glory to your Name. Assist me powerfully with your Grace; for if I be once left to my self, I shall relapse into my natural weakness, which is but

a meer Nothing and Infirmity.

Some trouble themselves too much in philofophising on this spiritual life, which is needless; it being enough to say, The Spirit of Jesus must be the Spirit of my Interiour; 'tis He by

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whom I must live this life, and act accordingly: and so free our selves from other considerations, which may hinder our liberty to follow this light; and fall faithfully to practice, on the occasions of Crosses, Contempts, and Disgraces

which happen to us in this life.

I ought daily to endeavour after purity, although I cannot attain the highest practice, because the course of my life, wherein God has placed me, will not permit it, nor does exact of me to attempt of my self the grand effects of purity, lest I should be discouraged by failing in the enterprize. This is only the perfection of the greatest Saints, and herein we must give our selves up to the conduct of the Spirit of Jesus Christ, who being infinitely wise, we need not fear having him for our Leader.

But, as we ought not to be too rigorous, so we must not be too faint-hearted in the ways of perfection, but apply our selves with love and resolution to all occasions, by suffering peaceably, and with contentation, whatever injuries we may receive from others, in seeking too

much their own interest.

All sufferings are to be entertain'd with love, but especially what we suffer by Injustice. For is not this that which the Son of God hath done principally upon Earth, by suffering innocently? Do not therefore say, I would suffer this injury, if he that does it, had the least reason for it: for this proceeds from self-love and passion. It may well be, that he has no reason to do you this injury, but Divine Reason and the spirit of Christianity teach you to bear it patiently? Tis good

good to suffer thus, and in this to imitate Jesus;

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is d And seeing this exercise of the supernatural life does bring with it a universal Peace; and this Peace cannot be preserved, without suffering contentedly all injuries whatsoever, this excellent life does teach us holy Patience. Now, this Patience preserves this Peace, and this Peace brings with it an admirable Liberty, and Resolution to mind principally the One thing necessary; which is, to give up our selves to God and his direction.

CHAP. X.

Our greatest happiness on Earth is, to profess the way of Christianity.

I Have a great resentment of joy and thankfulness, to see my self a Member of Christ's Church, and in the number of the Faithful. I have a sensible taste of this happiness, which is incomparable. O my God! what shall I return unto you, for having prevented me with this signal mercy? why have you chosen me out among so many thousands? Alas! this is the excess of your sole bounty to me. To be a Child of the Church, O what a happiness is this? Tis of more worth than to be Monarch of the whole world. The Church is the Congregation of the Faithful; that is, of those who believe and confess Jesus Christ, and have no other Maxims nor Sentiments than his. O my Soul! let us then

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nations.

To be a Member of Christ's Church, is to be a person who ought to have an affection for humiliations and crosses; to be well content not to thrive in the world, and to advance in Virtue by opprobrious usage and contradictions. What a misery is it, to see us live so little in the exercise of Christianity! We account it an honour to be in authority, to be well descended, to have a generous spirit; but to be a Christian, we are affraid to own it by our actions. O the beauty that adorns our Christian Profession! How wonderful is it, and yet how little esteemed by us! I shall be very honourable and happy to keep that with me, when other things are gone and variable.

O how amiable are the Maxims of a supernatural life! in what an excellent order do they put all things! They give to every one what is their due; to God all Honour and Glory, and to me a wretched sinner Contempt and Confusion. For lought to consider my self as a centre of all miseries and deserved punish-

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God is the Centre and Object of all the adorations af Men and Angels; Glory is his just tribute, but to me belongs confusion. If I should be bearen diffracefully, I dught to take it with contentation to feelustice to well done to me on this occasion. And if I was truly animated with the spirit of Christianity, I ought as much defire to be humbled, as worldlings thirn after Honours, Praises and Preferments. Tis

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Tis a supernatural disorder, not to love Ignominies, and not to endeavour the destruction of our corrupted Nature. Jesus hath built his My-stical Body on the ruins of our Natural Body: and we cannot form in us the same life of Jesus. without the ruin of ours; that is to say, our natural life, according to our depraved inclinations.

Poverty, Pains Contempts, your dear Companions, good Jefus, make sometimes my heart ake; and then again they refresh me, breathing forth such sweet Persumes as chear my spirits. A Persume that purifies and calms my Soul into a fit temper to converse with you. I will now wonder no more that your Spouses run after you in the Odour of your Persumes. A Persume that doth strengthen me to accomplish the desires I have to be conformable to you. My heart dilates it self with hope to see that happy day in this life, when I shall be free from all molestation of Creatures, and have some participation of the poverty and abjections of Jesus crucified.

We cannot live here without some Director or other; for either the Humanity of Jesus will direct us, or the Humanity of Adam will govern us. If we live the life of Christianity, the First will conduct us, and impart to us such directions as his holy Soul received from the Divinity, which are all for the Cross and humiliations. If we love only a human life, the Other will guide us in the ways of self-love.

Tis as great a miracle for a Soul to live a supernatural life, as for a stone to elevate it self into

The Interiour Lib.z. 90 into the air: because the corruption of sin hath made the Soul fo heavy, that of her felf she cannot but tend downward to fin and misery. This is that which magnifies the power of Grace in us. So that it is a prodigious vanity to boaft of our good actions, when being done by the supernatural power of Grace, they are not the fruits of human Nature. If a Soul loses the fight of the light of Faith, the will foon lose her self in the Mist of self-love. If the does not live in a continual mortification

by curbing her natural appetites, she must needs fall into superfluities and imperfections.

The sweetness and joy that a Soul receives from austerities, crosses, poverty, denudation of Creatures, makes her spiritual, peaceful, chearful, and affords her solid content and satisfaction. The content and delights the receives from fensual pleasures, though lawful, as Meat and Drink, temporal successes, Reputation, &c. make her carnal, and afford her but a falle peace and vain joy: and inflead of elevating her to contemplation, do more or less depress her to sen-Suality of amol amelians ampliant come the world To wine truck our reduced a received

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CHAP. XI.

That Truth is only found in the Spirit of Christianity; the rest is Vanity.

When the beams of the light of Faith are darted into a Soul, they discover to her, that there's nothing true indeed but the verities of Christianity, which Jesus came from Heaven to teach us, and all the rest but deceit and vanity. O what happines is it for a Soul to be thus irradiated. Then she begins to know how she hath been enveloped with darkness, and dwelt in obscurity. O what joys do now restesh her! How rich and glorious is she in perceiving that what she thought to be true Riches, Glory, and Joy, is false and counterseited, and in reality but poverty, infamy and sorrow.

These heavenly Illustrations do open her eyes to see perfectly the vanities of this world, which now she values not; but Jesus is her only joy, her life and verity. Whatsoever is not Christian, (that is to say, according to the Maxims of Christianity) she esteems now as folly, death, and perdition: and what to the world and the slesh is folly, death, and perdition, she accounts to be wisdom, life, and the greatest gain. O when the rays of this light do pierce a Soul, how on a sudden becomes she knowing, content, and

elevated!

ego.

'Tis hardly credible how much fuch a Soul is alienated from her felf, and whatfoever is

not God. She fees fo much wisdom in the folly of Saints, and fo much beauty in their miseries. that all the allurements of the world cannot win her affections. For having been taken up with the super-eminent knowledge of Jesus Christ; she cannot understand why she should dread crosses & mortifications; nor how 'tis posfible for men to apply themselves so much to the affairs of the world, and so little to the concerns of Eternity. Carnal prudence believes these Maxims to be Chimera's, but in reality they are folid Verities. She thinks the contrary Maxims to be Truths, which in effect are but meer Illufions and Vanities. What more convincing evidence can be given hereof, than the example of

the Son of God?

The facred Humanity of Jesus entred into the highest and most eminent alliance with God that ever was, or can be, by being united hypostatically to the Divinity: And so being united to an infinite Verity, without doubt by this alliance entred into the possession of all real good. But what was the confequence of this alliance? The greatest humiliation that ever was. profit arrived to Jeffis Christ thereby? He became the most abject, persecuted despised of all Creatures. And why all this? Because being fo frictly allied to Verity, he could not but have the possession of all veritable goods belonging to his mortality; and being fo intimately united to the Divinity, he entred into a strict obligation to procure the interests of his Father. But the best means to repair the Glory of God offended by the pride of finners, was humiliatimanity therefore would suffer and die, to repair the injuries done to God, and to purchase Souls for him, that might adore and love him to

all Eternity.

This being considered, let men tell me that Honours, Pleasures, and Riches, are true goods to be desired; and I will answer with the Psalmist Omnis homo mendax, that every man's a Lyar. I will hold close to the eternal Verity, who hath taught me by his words and example, That pains, poverty, humiliations, are the true goods that a Christian ought to esteem and love above all things. But 'tis a very hard matter to dive into the bottom of this Verity; it must be a great and powerful supernatural illumination can only do it. O how happy is that Soul which sees sufficiently to disern Verity from Vanity.

A great number of Christian Verities lie hidden to us, because we acquiesce in only human appearances, which are vanities, and cloak real truths from our eyes. Jesus was born in a poor Stable, under the appearance of the Edict of Augustus Casar; nevertheless this was in verity the design of the eternal Father hidden under this Edict. The Emperour executed his vanity, and the eternal Father at the same time execu-

ted the verity of his Divine Decrees.

Herod made Jesus flie into Egypt; we judge he did it for sear he should take his Crown from him: And 'twas in effect the eternal Father who crown'd himself in bringing about his sacred Ordinations by such mysterious proceedings.

The Interiour Lib. 2. dings. O how the exercise of a Christian Life, and the study of its mysteries, discovers to a Soul admirable Verities! And besides this all is but vanity.

CHAP. XII.

There are many ways in Christianity, all which are according to the Life of Jesus Christ.

Brains with nice subtleties, and daily find out some pretence or other, to excuse us from the practice of this supernatural life, as having not proper qualifications for it. Now there is no condition, for which Jesus hath not formed a Model for a supernatural life.

- 1. For he himself bath led divers lives on Earth.

 One was a life of a sufferings, chiefly at the time of his passion.
- 2: Another was a hidden, wiknown, despised life, almost all his days, except the last years, when the Glory of his Father, and the Salvation of Man-kind, did necessitate his manisestation.
- 3. Another was an illuminative life, by his Divine Sermons, when he preach'd as our Doctor, so instruct the People.

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- 4. Another was a liberal and charitable life, as when he fed his Auditors miraculously in the Wilderness, and healed all manner of Diseases.
- 4 Another was a life of converse, as when be treated with the Jews to bring them to Faith and Repentance.
- 6. Another was a life all of sweetness and extraordinary illuminations, as on Mount Tabor.
- 7. Another was a life of Contemplation, as when be passed whole nights in prayer.

8. Another was a life of mortification and fasting, as when tempted by Satan in the Desart.

Now, Jesus led all these lives so different, to instruct Christians, who are his Members, and in them shall live to the worlds end; so as they may truly say with St. Paul, Vivo ego, jam non ego, &c. I live; yet not I, but fesus who lives in me. Jesus hath honoured all these states of his life in his Church on Earth: Some hath chosen tohonour his suffering life, and in a manner it seems they are proper for nothing O.hers he chooses to honour his abject life, and in this they are excellent; never ceasing to glorisie highly the abjections of Jesus Christ, by being well-pleased with their humiliations for the love of God. God hath in his House those forts of Servants, who are thought by some to be unprofitable, being neither proper to fuffer much, nor procure the good of others, spiritual or temporal; and so are deípis'd,

spis'd, and of no repute, but judg'd a charge to Religion, and nothing ferviceable; and 'tis thoughe a mighty matter to endure them.

O Divine Light of Abjection! descend from Heaven, and enlighten poor Souls. What changes wife thou make in them? What gory will they return to God? O the blindness of some who are spiritual, not to know how to be content with the portion that Jesus gives them, and live the life which be affigus them! 'Tis decreed in Eternity, that I shall live a life of abje. ction, and I will need; live an active life, not pro-

per for me.

O Christian, whoever thou art! it matters not what life then livest, provided thou dost honour the life of Jesus If thou desirest nothing but the will of Gods any one of his mays will content thee. If than beest well mortified and annihilated in thy felf, than will be content to glorifie God so much, and in that manner as best pleases him. A hidden life glorifies God as well as an active; have a care in designing one for the other, unter a false zeal to do more for God Perhaps berein shou secretly seekest after Fame and Splendor; but this is 14that to defire the Honour of the life of Jesus, than purely the life of fesus Christ: A purity where Nature cannot find what she desires.

Othe happy state of denudation, which ravisheathe Angels with admiration! A Soul that has mounted to this point, hath left all Creatures below her, and can truly fay with holy David Quid mibiest in Calo, aut a to quid volui super Tarram? God is the only object of my desires. To be plung'd in abjection, is to find God purer . sigi

ly.

Christian. Lib. 2. Ty. Behold whither a Soul is conducted, whom many think good for nothing. Ohow the judgments of men are different from the thoughts of God!

Let therevery one honour God, by the way and life that is proper for them; otherwise they will fall into persurbations of spirit, and being disquieted, will become troublesom to themfelves and others. But this is not the work of a day, we shall find it a hard task to become dead to the world and our felves. Every frate is good; yea, the most abject. All Grace is excellent; yea, the least and meanest. There are much value, and yet are really to be more efreemed than Visions, Rapts, or Revelations. To labour and suffer for God, is of greater worth

than ExtaGes

Tis a truth well enough known by many, though practisd but by few, that a little matter only small natural inclination unmortified, suf-fices to retard our progress to persection. For this reason we must exactly die to all Creatures, annihilate in us every motion that tends not to God some way or other. As for example; To give no refreshment to the body, by meat, drink, or fleep, &c, but for necessity. We must also mortifie in us the desire of Honour and temporal Commodities; yea, love abjection, pains and poverty, willing nothing but what may conduce to advance God's glory. I more value the union of a Soul with God in humillations and fufferings, than in confolations, CHAP.

CHAP. XIII.

Some Maxims concerning a Supernatuval Life.

God! what a poor Christian am I in occasions of tryal! I have imprinted in me some Idaa's and Sentiments of a supernatural Life, but when it comes to put them in practice, my timerous Nature shrinks, and makes excuses to shun sufferings: and then the occasion being over, I have great regreat for not being couragious, and come to know thereby my little Virtue, and small Perfection. I then see that the rule of Persection is the conformity which we have with Jesus crucified, poor, and abject. When that is great, our Persection is great also; But that I find I have sittle or no affective consormity with Jesus crucified.

Behold here those lights and directions I have fearnt by conference with a holy person, and are good for my practice and solid establishment

ma fupernatural life.

Y. We must accustom our body to austerities, exercising it with loving chastisements for our own transgressions, and the sins of others.

yerled love of the Drumity, but by passing first by fest by passing first by fest by passing first by and despised, past and abject. We see him post and despised, attended with sew followers, because

- 3. We must have an ardent love for solitude and recollection, to the end we may be wholly for God, and correspond saithfully to the inspirations of his holy Spirit. And although we ought to have a general indifferency to all states and calls of God, yet tis better to incline rather to retirement and solitude, not meerly to enjoy the sweetness thereof, but that we may not be wanting to co-operate with the Grace of God vonchsafd unto us. Holy solitude is the region of Divine Communications; Ducam eam in solitudinem, & loquar ad cor ejus, saith God by the Prophet: I will lead a Soul into solitude; and speak interiourly to her heart.
- 4. The reason why we see so sew, even devout Christians, make progress in persection, is, because they limit the Grace they have received, bindring its enlargement by natural arguments, and human prudence. They say, 'Tis enough for me to do this, or that; I ought not to aspire to so high persection; those who live in the world cannot be so elevated in the ways of God. These, and such-like excuses, they make, which hinder the Grace of God from working fully what he intended.

If we did but consider the ardent desire that Jesus hath to advance Souls in the ways of Divine love, and how ready he is to bestow on us new Graces, upon our faithful corresponding with the former; we would be both ravished

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and ashamed also, to be so backward in giving our felves up to the conduct of God, who defires nothing fo much as that we may love him

perfectly, and enjoy him eternally.

But as while Jesus was on Earth, 'cis said of him, That the world knew him not, and his own received him not : for seeing him born in a Stable, circumcis'd as a finner, live poorly as a Carpenter, persecuted, accused, condemned to die an infamous death on the Cross; they wou'd not take him for the promised Messias: so as yet he is not well known, and many Christians themselves do not receive him, nor let his Spirit and Maxims reign in their hearts. Yea, some who profess the way of persection, do not, as they ought, esteem and embrace his humiliations and abjections: For we too much defire Honour and Preferment, and too much fear abjection and fuffering.

O my Soul! what haft thou done hitherto, not to have as yet begun this life crucified and annihilated? I confess my folly and blindness. O my God! make me presently to set upon it, and let not any day pass over without the happiness of suffering something for your love.

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would do down the market of the bearing ्या और कर्षण हो है। अध्योति का विकास के राज

zw Graces, up a our faithful corresponding budliver thed at Man war I man CHAP:

CHAP. XIV.

What content a Soul receives in a Supernatural Life.

WE have oftentimes no need of any other care than to be faithful to an ordinary way of Devotion, without pretending to what is extraordinary; and we have reason to fear that motions now and then to undertake a life of greater perfection, may proceed rather from a feeking of our own excellency, than a true defire of pleafing God. Among these dangers, blindness, and obscurities, we stand in great need of the light of Grace, and conduct of some holy Person, who is able to discern what is best for us. However, putting our confidence in God, and living in an entire dependence on him,

we shall find peace and quiet of mind.

If we have defires for any thing, let it be for such things as Jesus crucified defired, for they are contrary to our natural inclinations. And though there may possibly occur some self-seeking, yet this is the way of Grace, inafmuch as the Found of our Soul is agreeable to the Interiour of Jesus, and not to that of Adam. Let us have a defire to be mortified daily with good St. Paul; Mortificamur tota die. We must endeavour to draw profit from incommodities and ill successes, by using them for the advancement of Grace in us. By this means we shall purifie our selves, and the Interiour of our Souls will

will empty it self, and make room for the spirit of Jesus Christ, bringing with him joy and peace unspeakable.

When we shall have found out the corruption of our heart, our inability to any good, yea, to the least good thought, as of our selves, tis not for us to aspire after the most eminent ways; but judging our selves unworthy thereof, and content with little our Saviour shall please to give us, we must co-operate humbly and faithfully with that small portion of Grace we have already, and not grow idle, wishing for those eminent Graces, wherewith perhaps our Souls shall never be beautissed.

This is one of the chiefest points of humility, to be content with that little portion we have in the stare of Grace, and judge our selves unworthy of God's favour. Tis true, there's nothing we ought so highly esteem as Grace, and its increase in us, and desire it of God with incessant prayers; but this must be with perfect submission to his Divine will and pleasure, that we

may not disturb the peace of our Souls.

On one side, I behold my extreme misery, and I find my self so depressed, that all my natural strength and endeavours, do what they can so the utmost, can never bring me out of my self; On the other side, I burn with desire to be wholly for God, by living a supernatural and spiritual life. It is to you, O Divine Spirit, I address my sighs, the infinite source of all Graces; you know I have a longing to live this spiritual life; in the exercise whereof I shall find the true practice of Divine Love, by which I shall satisfie my ardent

ardent defires to be wholly for Jesus, and shall live no more after my natural inclinations, and the Maxims of human Prudence. But I see how impossible it is for me to attain this, unless you vouch afte to affist me with your illuminations against my darkness, with your strength against my weakness, with your continual supplies against my relapses: For how often, O Divine Spirit, have I begun this supernatural life, and fallen from it, conquer d by my Nature, and worldly temptations! Draw me after you so powerfully, and continually, that I may no more return into my felf, but may sollow your attracts with perseverance.

I will follow you, dear Jesus, in the states of your mortal life, in annihilations, contempts, poverty and sufferings. And if I lose the sight of you in those obscurities which sometimes cloud my Soul, yet let me not lose courage. Provided I continue in your ways, that is, in the esteem and love of the true Christian Life, you will not be far from me; it being impossible that Jesus annihilated and suffering should not be near to a Soul suffering and anni-

hilared.

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Well then, though we may lose the fight of Jesus, the light we have in Prayer leaving us: shough we feel him not by sensible influences, yet we are assured that he is near us, if we be in his ways by self-denial and a love of humiliations for his sake. O how happy is a Soul to be content to follow the annihilations of Jesus, without the feeling of his persumes and sweetnesses! She does practice the purity of love in H 4

this condition: For to be deprived of light and confolations, which is very harsh to Nature, and suffer it contentedly, is one of the most excellent acts of a spiritual life, which consists chiefly in a perfect resignation to suffer as well inwardly as outwardly, when God

pleases.

I am very sensible by experience, that there's a vast difference between thinking and doing, talking and living this true Christian life. When we meet with no repugnance, we find it not difficult to practice Virtue, whereof the Idæa's are as sweet, as the Acts are bitter of such as consist in privations and sufferings. I am in a state wherein I feel repugnances, and am resolved thereby to humble my self the more, and keep the peace of my Soul, by an entire considence of the succours which the Grace of God will vouchfafe unto me. I consider that nothing was more seeds than the Apostles, before Pentecost; They hid themselves, abandon d their Master in his sufferings, and Peter deny'd him; but after they had received the Holy Ghost, he insus'd such strength into their Souls, that they became powerful and couragious to admiration.

Iches, the light we have in Prayer leaving us: though we feel him not by tentible influences, yet we are affured that he is near us, if we be to his ways by felf-denial and a love of humiliations for his take. O new happy is a Soultque content to fellow the applications of jefus, without the feeling of his per umes and tweetneffes! She does mather the parity of love in helfes! She does mather the parity of love in

CHAP.

CHAP. XV.

That 'tis impossible to live this Supernatural Life by Human Prudence.

The supernatural Life is a continual mortilfication of depraved Nature.

- 1. For 'tis certain, First, That we cannot live this excellent life, but by annihilating our sense and reason.
- 2. Secondly, That this life is wholly according to the Spirit, which cannot be but the Spirit of God, which inspires the Soul with his influences and sacred motions.
- 3. Thirdly, That the Soul which lives this life must be elevated above sense and reason, whether it be in Prayer, or the practice of Virtue; which cannot be done, but by offering up her self to God as a continual Sacrifice. That though oftentimes we must do things sensual, as to eat and drink; yet these must be done as Grace directs us: And other things according to reason, as to love our Relations and Friends; yet this must be only in God, and as his Oracles do distate to us: O life of Grace! how art thom a continual death and mortification! Who lives Christianly, lives a Martyrdem. Tota vita Christiana, Crux est & Martyrdem. Tota vita Christiana, Crux est & Martyrdem. However, the a joyful Martyrdem, for solid.

The Interiour 106 Lib. 12. folid joy cannot but make gladthe Soul where Grace inhabits.

O that this fundamental truth of our Salvation did once well fink into our hearts! The Son of God, and eternal King of Glory, leaves the bosom of his Father, and becomes man, to live and die in infinite humiliations. Jesus gives us life by his death; He puts us in a state of Grace, by ruining himfelf according to Nature: He purchases Eternity for us, by yielding up his temporal life. And the Evangelist expressing his death, doth on set purpose use these words, Emisit Spiritum, He sent forth his Spirit. Without doubt he sent it into the hearts of his faithful Servants, to the end they may learn to live by his Spirit to him who died for them. So fays St. Paul, Misit Deus Spiritum Filis sui in corda nostra, ut qui vivunt jam non sibi vivant, sed ei qui pro ipfis mortuus eft.

What remains then, but that we banish our carnal Spirit, which carries us on to sensual delights, although sometimes not sinful? Let us love the Spirit of penance, of fuffering, of felfdenial and humiliations, Gerson hath an excellent faying: By bom much the more Nature is mortified, by lo much the more Grace is infused. We must often call to mind, that the Grain of Whear cast into the Earth, except it die, cannot bring forth fruit. If we do not die to out selves and the World, and the Spirit of Nature, we forth the fruits of Divine Love. We must be as mething before men, that we may be fornething felia

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Christian. Lib. 2. in the fight of God. Why should the Disciple be above his Master? The Spirit of Grace and the Spirit of Nature do continually jar and war one against the other. The exercise of the spiritual life will afford us light to difeern their different motions; but when difcerned, it requires great courage to be faithful to the motions of Grace. To yield to Nature, weakens and darkens the Soul; to follow Grace, gives life and vigour. It concerns us therefore to take part with God against our selves. This practice is clear and efficacious to conquer our passions, and carry us on to the purity of Virtue, when this light is infus'd into us, after the manifestation of God's goodness tous.

Reason may be serviceable to conquer our passions, but this light must give place, when the beams of Grace display their splendors. For we ought as much as we can to stifle the Maxims of reason, that we may become more capable of Divine Illuminations, which elevate us above human reason. In a word, as no man can come unto the Son, unless the Father draw him by preventing Grace: so no man can come unto the Father, but by the Son, sollowing his Maxims and Example, and obeying the motions of his Spirit. This is the order and way of Grace, and tisin vain for us to look for any of

ther in a spiritual life.

The Conclusion, That we ought to apply our selves to the practice of a Supernatural Life.

VE must have a special care, that we place not Persection amis, for this will much retard us in the way of Virtue. Hence it will do well, not to have too great an esteem of the Unitive and Mystick way. Not but 'tis. good, yea, excellent, for a Soul to be fo elevated by God's gracious conduct. However, we must acknowledge that the unitive way brought to practice, is more excellent and necessary, feeing this is the Christian life in action; and the other is a myflick life, confifting in extraordinary elevations of the Soul and wonderful unions with God in Prayer and Contemcapable of Divice Illuminations, which elloweld

al abserve that our blessed Saviour says, Wholosgen will be my Disciple, must rake up bis Cross, and of the mass Heiddes not fay that he must be elayased in Prayer, but that the mast take up his Crossa that is the must practice the Maxims of the Gelpelas Happytheniare they who are crucified to the world, though they be not elevated in Spirit; and those elevated Souls are but happy in that they are conformable to Jesus crucified, and by their unions more disposed to the Cross and Sufferings. The crucified Life is, as it were, the end of the mystick life, whose illuminations and sweet influences do much conduce tofortifie the Soul to bear the Crois.

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S. Terefa observes, That one of the best signs of a Divine Extasie is, when it works in the Soul an extraordinary defire of Suffering; and that a Soul cannot return to her felf from such boly communications with God, but well instructed; which must needs be, that the perfection of love consists in suffering for fesus, and not in enjoying him. Enjoyment in this life is not of so much worth as suffering; This more than That advances our Glory. Let us not then complain that we have not our part in the mystick life, so that we be but crucified Christians; and let us be content to feel our Spirit in Prayer among Thorns of aridities, coldness, and desolation, as well as among the sweet perfumes of a sensible Devotion.

We must take up our Cross to follow Christ, as well when we suffer in Soul as Body. For 'tis the property of a true Christian, to glory in the Cross of Jesus Christ. But this did extend as well to his Soul, as to his body. The Divine Soul of Jesus was left without sensible influences and succours from the superiour part, and from his Father for some time. We must love to be conformable to him herein, and rest there with resignation and contentment. Let our affections be more inflamed with the love of her sufferings here, than of enjoyments. And if we complain of any thing, let it be when we do not suffer something for Jesus Christ.

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BOOK III.

Of the presence of God, and giving our selves up to Divine Providence.

CHAP. I.

Our sirst thought in the morning ought to be, That God is present.

A S foon as I awake, I ought to consider that I am in the bosom of God, for in Him we live, move, and have our being. We live, and are indeed in his presence, and yet hardly think of him. I am surrounded with his Grandeurs, his Mercies, his Riches, his Divine Perfections, and yet am taken up with petty matters. O what blindness! what darkness is this! I fall from one sleep into another, my Soul being no more awake by day than by night; my interiour senses being then boundup, as before the exteriour.

I am like a blind man asleep, doubly blind, for sleep takes away his sight a second time. When he awakes, he sees not the light of the Sun, nor the beauty of the Universe, nor the variety of Creatures that are before him; He walks in the world, but beholds not the different parts thereof; when he is asleep, his blindness increases. In like manner, when we sleep, we are in a profound forgetfulness of God: But, what is lamentable, we continue this Oblivion when we are awake, by reason we seldom think on God and his Persections, our Souls are so wholly taken up with worldly business.

Alas! how dangerous is this sleep and forgetfulness! We have no excuse, seeing Nature
does teach us better manners, Tempus est de
somno surgere; When the Sun rises, tis time to
walk as Children of light. When natural sleep
leaves me, let me not (dear Savionr) lose my
self in the crowd of Creatures, but take up my
thoughts with your Perfection, with your Love,
with your Mercies, that I may not sleep all
day long, by being unmindful of your pre-

fence.

Dear Jesus! tis not in my power to hinder this spiritual drowzyness, and my misery will not permit me to think on you continually: but be pleased to watch for me, that I may be conversant with God by your divine and holy Occupations; that I may know him by your knowledge; that I may have an eye to him by your regards; that I may love him by your loves: and by this means I shall be strengthened in my weakness. If we do not awake with Je-

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When we see with the eye of Faith, that God is every-where, and is the first Mover, we take delight therein, and look upon God as the Soul of the world, and our Soul tends to him, as to her Centre, and sweet repose. This repose works in her a will to give herfelf up wholly to his Ordinations; with an entire love. This refignation, when 'tis general and real indeed, doth powerfully free her from the love of the world, making her paffive to the Conduct of God, and his holy Attracts and Inspirations. What good thoughts God fends her in the morning, the nourishes all day long, making use of them on all occasions, and takes from the hand of God whatever happens, peace or trouble, fweet or bitter, reft or Jahour, because 'tis God's will, who glorifies himfelf by all events. This carries a Soul on to the practice of pure Virtue. In and

fels God! But this cannot be without being dead to the world. Bleffed Mary Mardalen being ing dead to the world, and forfaking it, year

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CHAP. II.

The presence of God in the Soul makes us little value the absence of the Creatures. at adevon honoman sa

Find my Heart and Soul fo content in that God is inseparably united to me, that I am hardly sensible of the absence of my dearest Friends. I know not when I shall suffer any thing, for all mortifications prove sweet unto me, by reason of the abundant joy the presence of God affords unto me. God is in me, and I in him, and nothing can separare me from him, because he is always present in me by his Inmenfity, which is his Essence. The thought hereof does so affect my heart, that I value not the privation of all Creatures; but rather I get this advantage, in that methinks by their absence God is more intimately present with me. And by how much the more I am elevated above all Creatures, though some be holy persons, and dear to me, by fo much the more I feel my heart more united to God, as to its Centre, where I find true quier and repose, moi van ils and und

Itake for a special grace and favour the employment God gives me by his facred Providence, What have I to do with Creatures, feeing God is in me, and I in him, feeing he is for me, and I for him? O what Riches it is to pos sess God! But this cannot be without being dead to the world. Bleffed Mary Magdalen being dead to the world, and forfaking it, yea,

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Lib. 3. Christian.

her dearest Brother Lazarus, and her beloved Sister Murtha, sound God present in her Soul, and that sufficed I participate a little the joys of this Saint, in possessing God after I have so happily sound him. When a Soul complains of the absence of any Creature, 'tis a sign she has not yet sound God so well as she ought. But may not some Creatures be instrumental to bring us to God? I grant it. But when we have sound him, why don't we then leave off all affection to worldly things?

Alas! how flat is the gust that Creatures affords, after we have tasted of God's sweetness, & 'tis but a torment to us to continue with them! O my God! seeing I have found you, I will never forsake you. My Soul is so present with you, that methinks I enjoy you. Separate me more and more from all Creatures, that this sweet enjoyment may increase in my Soul. What need shall I then have of converse with

Creatures?

Tis of fingular profit to consider how many holy men and women have (asit were) buried them elves in solitudes, flying the society of all Creatures, that they might be wholly taken up with the presence of God! Saint Mary of Egypt hid her self in a vast Desart, to be far from the sight and remembrance of the world, that she might only find her God and Creator. Omy God! how happy was she by thus finding you, siving without the help of any Creature, without Cloaths, and almost without any refection. She had no person to comfort her, no person to complain to of her sufferings, no person

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fon to take part of her consolations; she alone was with God alone, in a general deprivation of all Creatures. O how this spirit of separation from all created things is excellent! O how necessary is it to a Soul, who defires to be wholly for God, and enjoy the sweets of his D. vine Pre-

fence!

But to come to this, we must suffer much both from our felves and others, to the end we may be freed from the love of the world. God himfelf, who will be all in all to his Creatures, oftentimes brings us home to himself, by great variety of afflicting events. This makes the lives of the Servants of God full of continual alterations, as well in temporal affairs as spiritual, defigned for his greater Glory; sometimes it goes well, sometimes ill with them, in their Souls and bodies, by constant changes. These vicissitudes oblige them to love nothing but the Sovereign Good; and in this general abandon of all Creatures, God is pleas'd to let them feel the sweets of his Divine presence; and by this happy experience of God's presence, they grow insensible of the privation of things dearest to them, in which before they found Contentment.

Tis true, those Servants of God with whom we can converse, are as so many Conduit-pipes, by which God conveys some streams of living Water; so that we learn from them eternal verities, and many secrets of spirituality, with much advantage to our Souls. But these are only Pipes, Jesus Christ, God-man, is the true Source and Fountain from whence those Streams flow,

nol sl which

which we receive from them, or rather by them. 'Tis from the splendours of his Divinity we can have a prospect of his Grandeurs and Perfections. 'Tis from his facred Humanity we must learn the exercises of all Christian Perfection. When you please, dear Saviour, you will make a Soul to know the difference that is between the Spring-head, and the Pipes; between drawing the living Water of your Graces from your felf, and from your Saints; between a view of your Interiour, and the Perfections of Servants. And so to lose the presence of the holieft persons, to enjoy the presence of God in a more transcendent manner, is no los, but a gain. To be without the converse of God's Servants, to have more of their Divine Masters company, is no prejudice, but an advantage. The pierced fide of Jefus Chrift, is (as it were) a Sacred Mouth, from whence his Heart speaks more divinely to us in dumb Eloquence, than can the Tongues of Saints and Angels.

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CHAP. III.

That we can, and ought to conserve the prefence of God, in occasions of Extroversion.

A Soul may be as much separated from Creatures in the midst of Towns and Cities, as in the Desarts. Behold how I conceive this may be done: When God once makes a Soul sensible of his Grandeurs, and gives her lively resentments of his presence; this Soul thus illuminated, begins to be dead to the world, and regardless of it, because the light that brings her to know and tast God present, makes the Creature disgustful to her. Neither is it so much the insufficiency of Creatures that causes this disgust, as the all-sufficiency of God, and the lively feeling of his Divine presence, which may be had as well among the crowd of men, as in the Desarts.

This makes one a Citizen of the whole world; every place is indifferent to such a Soul; for being not attach'd to any Creature, God alone is what she desires, whom she knows is all in all, and his presence alike in every place. When we are sad for the absence of any Friend, 'tis for want of light from Heaven, seeing our greatest Friend is continually with us, And indeed 'tis injurious to God present in us, to be troubled at the absence of any Creature, and it is as much as if we should say to God, You alone are not sufficient for me, 'Tis an excellent means to bring

lingly content with their absence; yea, hardly to think upon them by reason of the veneration we have of the grandeurs of God, who being infinitely present with us, we cannot voluntarily be taken up with any thing else, without some sort of injury to his infinite Majesty.

Tis a great Mercy when Divine Providence orders our affairs so as to bring us off from vain occupations, seeing we can never possess God fully, unless we be dead to worldly things. As long as they flatter us, and go on as we desire, they take us up too much, and we easily forget God: but his amiable Providence has a thousand ways to make them disgustful to us, by losses, by maladies, by falseness of friends, by ill success of affairs, by the substraction of sensible favours, and by a distast and bitterness, which at last we find in all worldly contentments.

We who understand not his amiable designs, do oftentimes our utmost endeavours to shun these things, as no small miseries; and yet this is indeed the Paradice of holy Souls, whereby they find God, who is most present to that heart, where no Creature finds entertainment. And when such a Soul tasts the sweetness of God, she disgusts the Creatures; and though they importune her, she generously contemps them, and tis a punishment to give any attention to

their allurements.

When a Soul does not engage her self in worldly affairs, but by the order of God, her Interiour will receive no prejudice; for she is always in a state to return to God, whom in a

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manner

The Interiour 120 manner she does not leave in those employ-ments. And the same light which discovers to her the intime presence of God, makes her see also the orders of God in respect of external affairs, to which the yields a peaceable and ready obe-dience. For the is for doing what God would have her, though the must fole for some time that fweet repote which the possesses by the enjoyment of God. What makes het retire into her internal quiet, is not the quiet it felf, nor the sweetness thereof, but the order of God, who is pleas'd to unite a Soul to himself by intervals, and gives her a gust by his presence, that he is her centre and final happines But when God will have it fo, the changes also her operations, and leaves God in a manner to converle with Creatures. She is so distengaged, that she willingly moves not but by God's motions, which carry her whither he pleases, either to enjoy him, or do good to others; all is indifferent to her, because the seeks nothing but to pleafe God.

Nevertheless, tis true, that a poor Soulenamour dof the sweetness of God's presence, and
of the internal peace of this enjoyment, does
not without some regret return to exteriour
Objects, and sensual Functions. She then neither speaks, nor hears, nor takes refection, without some reluctance; because being sensible of
this infinite Good present with her, and finding
nothing in the Creatures but misery and dissailsaction, she cannot well quit this excellent
Object, to turn to the deceitful figure of sensual things. Her Treasure being within her,

all

Lib. 3. Christian. 121
all her thoughts and her affections are there,

Thave sometimes selt in my self desires to be blind, deaf, and dumb, to the end I might be more entirely separated from all Creatures, and more intimately united to the Creator present in me; experiencing with grief, that my Soul otentimes forgets this Divine presence, when she makes sallies out upon the Creatures by the Gates of my senses. Well then, I must keep them shut, that my Soul being cloister'd up within her own walls, may be wholly taken up with God alone.

CHAP. IV. and Last of the state of the state

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That the presence of God is clearly seen in a purified Interiour.

The Idaa of a Looking-glass is very pertinent to explicate this matter. For God makes himself sometimes to be seen in the Interiour of the Soul as in a well-polish'd Glass, in the same manner as the Sun, or rather its figure, is visible in a Fountain of pure Water. The Soul sees not the sace of God, that is the priviledge of Glory; but she beholds him there more clearly than elsewhere; God painting his resemblance in her, in the same sort as the Sun shews his visage in pure water.

Thews his visage in pure water.

But the purity and peace must be very great in the Interiour of such a Soul, to present the impression of this presence: For as the breath darkens

luntary imperfections fully the purity of the Soul And as the least motion that troubles the Fountain, makes it lose the Image of the Sun, so the extroversions and fallies out towards Creatures, makes the Soul lose the fight of the

Divine presence in her.

122

When God manifests himself so present to a Soul, she must regard nothing but him, otherwise she loses her happiness; it being not possible to behold the Image of the Sun in the Fountain together with those that pass by the way, We must let them pass without gazing on them, whatever Friends they be, otherwise we shall find that our Beloved will veil his face, from whom we our selves have turned our eyes. There is a time to speak, and a time to be silent.

Let us therefore in this happy moment speak tono Creature, and give this reverence to the presence of God in us, as to regard It only, and

nothing elie.

Devil to shew his visage in his place. This is when the Soul is molested with black thoughts, wicked representations, soul temptations, fond imaginations; and then she must guard her self with patience in the acknowledgment of her unworthiness, and confess that she deserves to be continually bansh'd from God's presence. But if our sidelity be great in this state of darkness and interiour di quiet, it will not be long er God shew his sace, and make fair weather. There be some who loved others so passionately while they were alive, that they go to Magici-

ans to procure a fight of them after death, and are ravish'd to behold them in their enchanted glasses. A Soul passionately enamour'd on God, is ravish'd to behold him, though but for a moment in her Interiour, and sears no Motifications, nor the loss of all Creatures, if they do but purifie the glass to shew God to her.

According to the degree of Purity in the Soul, we find the presence of God in us; and the following Instructions, in my judgment, may conduce to purifie the Soul, and preserve

her in Purity.

- I. An indifference to every condition, to any employ what soever, whereby God may be glorified.
- 2. To be regular in our Exteriour Actions, not to busic our selves too much, and to do them with great attention.
- 3. To be well rooted in the Spirit of Mortification, to love Suffering and Humiliations, a manifest sign of a purified Interiour.
- 4. To have a great love for fesus Christ, dying on the Cross for us.
- 5. To have a continual recourse to God for a supply of his Grace, with a constant dependance on it.
 - 6. To be dead to the World, and worldly things

The Interiour Lib. 3.

'Tis said, That God is in the fond of the Soul, and there is bidden; fo as to find him we must hide our selves there also, by recollection and an internal Life, which Spiritual Authors call, The state of Introversion. The night time is most conducing to advance this disposition, when all creatures are in a manner dead to us, making no impression on our Senses, whereby we better conserve that reverence we owe to the presence of God in us. O how many Irreverences are we guilty of on this account? We leave him alone, when we perceive he is in the fond of our Soul to receive our homages, and we turn our eyes from his Majesty, though he regard us. Just as if one by special favour admitted into the Closet of his Prince to converse with him, should presently turn his head to look out of the Windows to behold the Pasfengers.

A Soul that is sensible of Gods presence, is not guilty of such ordinary miscarriages. least word or action that tends not to God, is troublesome to her; because that being unwilling to leave that respect she owes to Gods presence, the fears the least irreverences, as death. And Reing that all Creatures are nothing to the Creator, she often cries out, Quis ut Deus? Deus mens & emnia. Who is like unto God? My Godis all in all unto my heart. In this state, the Soul has not only a great respect for God, as God, but for Jesus Christ; God and Man, and for his Doctrine, and for his Maxims. The privation of all Creatures does relish better with her than the possession; knowing for cerziT' tain.

Lib. 3. Christian. 125 tain, that to enjoy God by such happy experience, is of more worth than the World.

CHAP. V.

That our union with the Presence of God, ought to be the Rule of our Actions.

Hat Soul has no small obligations to God, who manifests his Presence in her Interiour, and makes her sensible of this blessed uni-I know very well, that this union is fo full of sweetness and desirable, that 'tis of more worth than the enjoyment of all Creatures: But 'tis also full of extreme rigour, separating a Soul without any pity from whatfoever nature loves most dearly. She must then bid adieu to the most innocent Pleasures, by being generally dead to all things but God, or what relares to him. O what a pain is it, not to dare, because God is present, to be complacent to our Friends, or be serviceable to them with a natural inclination, but only upon a motive of Grace! For fuch a Soul must not follow the order of Nature, as from nature, but as elevated by Grace.

If the World call upon us, let us not regard it, for it will withdraw us from the presence of God, to please our selves or others by divertisements. A Soul attracted to enjoy the presence of God, has another rule. Those who are not thus attracted, nor have this enjoyment, may do well to comply with their neighbours by charitable complacences. The

The Fidelity which a Soul owes to God prefent, requires of her not to charge her felf with affairs but what are necessary; and to manage them with the Spirit of indifferency, aiming only to do Gods will, which fometimes we meet with as well in ill as good fuccesses. She must bemore taken up with God than those affairs, knowing well no business is of greater importance, than to conferve her union with God present. It no less concerns her to be well refign'd to the Orders of Divine Providence, to be content with Poverty, with Miferies, with Desolations, never seeking deliverance upon natural motives, but being pleas'd with abjection and humiliations, to fay with St. Paul, Placeo mihi in infirmitatibus, I am well pleas'd with my Infirmities. Such a Soul will give her felf up absolutely into the hands of God, to let him work her into what form he pleases, as fost wax, and fet what Impression he thinks best upon her, receiving all with profound humility; and if the be left naked, the refts contented. O how a Soul fo dead to all Creatures, is a pleafing Mansion for God to dwell in? 'Tis his delight to take there his habitation.

O how a Soul that finds God thus present with her, is troubled to be obliged to quit the sweet-ness of his presence! And when this is often, makes life somewhat troublesom, and she cries out: O my God, the well-beloved of my Soul, when will you deliver me from this burdensom newhen will you deliver me from this burdensom necessary? This is the greatest of miseries; to be deprived of all Creatures is no misery in comparison: But to be deprived of you, to enjoy whom

whom I was created, and without whom I cannot but be miserable, makes me ery out, Quando veniam, & apparebo ante faciem tuam? O when shall I come to enjoy your presence?

It feems to me, I am like a Traveller, who fees a far off a high mountain, and the way before him, but being on foot, he must sweat to get thither. In like manner, I have some prospect of Persection, and the obligations of a Soul longing after God, but I cannot accomplish them : However, I have a defire, and I stand in need of an abundance of Grace, to mount to Perfection. Holy Virgin; Mother of God, intercede for me, that I may receive a participation of your Graces, to enable and conduct me in the

ways of God

We must have a care that the Contentments we enjoy by this union with God present, does not exclude a union with the Crofs, Contempts, Poverty and Sufferings. A firict tye to the Interiour of Jesus glorified, does require also a frict conjunction to the Interiour of Jesus Crucified. Those two unions go hand in hand here; it being impossible to have part in the state of Jesus in Heaven, without having part in the states of Jesus on Earth. Let us take courage, and love as yet rather to fuffer than enjoy: We have but this short life to suffer in, but our enjoyment shall be to all Eternity. is the paracions, Foverey and

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CHAP. VI.

That the presence of God in us, puts us in a State of Suffering and enjoying.

Erfection doth not confift in a general freedom from Interiour and Exteriour troubles. Hitherto my weakness could not comprehend how a Soul at the tame time might be happy and miserable. I had so little strength, that my fufferings did stifle the enjoyment of Gods prefence in, me; and the fenfibility of them, dideclipse the other. And because I thought that this enjoyment of God could not be found, but in a Soul exempt from all forts of Sufferings, when Sadness, or Pains, or Troubles did seize upon me; I got free as foon as possible, to regain my former state of enjoyment. But I see my error, for now these sufferings shall become the means to unite me more trictly to God; I am content with them, and will offer them a facrifice to that hidden Majesty, who is really present in my Soul, ared or alestogn

For I conceive that the Sacred Humanity of Jefus, Hypoltatically united to the Word, had God most intimately present, remaining in this union in a state of enjoyment, and suffering also. As Man he offer'd up to the Divinity a continual Sacrifice of his Humiliations, Poverty and Sufferings; and the Divinity imparted to him a wonderful enjoyment of sweetness by his presence. And in this manner God is yet glorified in a Sout: He bestows upon her a profound Peace

Lib. 3. Christian. 129 in the Superiour faculties, by being sensible of

the Divine Presence: And in the mean time being mortified in the interiour part, she makes a perpetual homage of Sacrifice to God, by offering up her Suffering to him. A Soul in this state, is an excellent Image of Jesus, as both

Traveller and Comprehenfour.

God does not always manifest his presence to a Soul by abundance of Divine Irradiations, but fometimes by a fenfible Peacefulness, which gently touches the heart, and unites it to God. In this the Intellectual Faculties do nothing but barely eye God, and now and then the heart breaths forth fome amorous Aspirations. As, O what a Happiness is it to have God present without a possibility of Separation! What can I desire more then to have the possession of God? O my God, be my Portion, and my Heritage for ever. Sometimes also the Soul receives a certain prospect of the Grandeurs of God present, which works in her Adorations, and Humiliations: Sometimes the Soul is mov'd with fuch fenfible touches, that the experimentally finds God present in her, whereby she melts into affections, respect, and love, and praises to the Divine Majeffy; and thereupon enjoys a Peace that passes our understanding.

Crosses and Sufferings may bring a Soul in time to a more union with God, though not to the pleasures of enjoyment. A union so much the more excellent, by how much the more 'tis imperceptible to the Soul, who seeking her own satisfaction, has some mixture of self-love in the sweets of enjoyment, but cannot happen in the

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Crucified union, which joyns the Soul to God, in such a manner as is hardly perceptible.

That state is most perfect which brings us to the greatest Interiour Purity; but this cannot take up a mansion in our heart, without an entire death to all Creatures Now in the Crucified union, the Soul being only attached to the will of God, and not reflecting on her own operations, and so taking no self-satisfaction from them, the thinks all is lost, and that the has no part in the love of God, which is the only thing she passionately desires. What great pity is it

to love, and not to know it?

Nevertheless this Soul that seems to her self in so sad a condition, is a delightful Object in the eyes of God, who sees in her the love only of his interests, in that she is content with a total denudation; and confessing she is not worthy of Gods Graces, wherewith she beholds others adorned, and admiring their beauty, perceives not all this while what she is her self. And this ignorance of her own state possessing her Spirit, by a true sense of her own indignity, she easily concludes that she is a miserable Creature. And it is no wonder if discouragment and sadness set upon a Soul in this disposition, at least to affect the Inseriour part.

I clearly see, that this union Crucified, does advance us in the participation of the states of Christ Suffering, which is the greatest advantage a Soul can pretend to in this Life of Mortality, seeing this puts us in a condition of most expressing our love to God. This great Truth, well consider d, will wonderfully comfort a

Soul

Lib. 2. Christian 131
Soul that defires to be conform to the Image of
Lefts Crucified.

The Crucified union carries Mortification to the marrow of the Soul, making it die to whatfoever is not God, feeing that the lives by the privation of all Creatures. But the sensible union does nourish it self by reflections upon such a state, which will indeed purific a Soul from worldly affections; however, she will go on but slowly to the purity of Perfection, it God be not very merciful unto here.

O my God how ought we to give up our felves wholly, though in the dark, to the conduct of your Divine Providence of Tis your wildom to lead us through Obscurities. Ato the end we may deny our own judgment, which is no lover of Mortification. O how this insensibility does purific the operations of the Will, which cannot relish in this stare of denudation any thing,

but only your good pleasured of rather daude

The Soul in this Crucified union, has the advantage to know how cenderly Jefus Christ loved her in his abandonments and humiliations. He makes us to fuster this, that we may know the greatness of that; and this experimental knowledge discovers to us how much Jesus suffer'd in the state of his Humiliations, and puts the Soul in a disposition to follow him in his Humiliations. And seeing the greatness of the love of Jesus to us, was most manifested by his Sufferings for us, so our love to him is greatest by our Sufferings for him.

Tie to be observ'd, that the highest degree of this Crucified union, is to have no fight of the

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132 The Interiour Lib.3. excellency of this state, which once being perceived, begins to lessen our Holy Sufferings.

CHAP. VII.

That the Divine Presence makes us to love Prayer, or Action, as best pleases God.

I find the Life of Man to be poor and mise-rable, we see not God unless surrounded with Clouds. Our true Li e consists in a Holy Converse with God present, whereby a Soul enjoys a delightful repose, and is fill d with Peace unspeakable. And being ravish'd with such lovely sweets, does melt into enjoyments which transcend infinitely all earthly pleasures.

In this disposition a Soul does not relish the affairs of this World. Ordinary Discourses, though never so harmless, are troublesome to her. Yea, the occasions to help our Neighbour, though Good and Holy, are not then convenient nor pleasing to her. She is all for to be at the feet of Jesus with Mary Magdalen in a perfect repose, and let Martha go about her business.

Norwithstanding, God makes us to understand, that sometimes we must go out from this in time presence; and undertake Exteriour Actions in the Affairs of his Glory: Ingredic Exterious and this is the Life of a Holy Soul. She goes out by secret Orders well known to her self, and walks Peaceably in the pursuance of those Affairs which have immediate relation to

- I. We must undertake no business; yea, not good works without a Mission; that is, without some Interiour Call from God. And therefore is concerns us to have recourse to him by Prayer, to know his will, least we do what he does not require of us.
- 2. When we know that God sets us on work, we ought to be very faithful in the performance of it. I observe that affairs of obligation do not distract our Introversion.
- 3. We must acknowledge our insufficiency to bring our endeavours to a Happy issue. Tis she Sun that makes the Plants to grow, to blossom and fructific, and not the Gardiner that sets and waters them: In like manner, 'tis the Grace of God that makes our endeavours prosperous. Paul may plant, and Apollo may water, but God gives the increase.
- 4 To regulate the times of our Exercises, without which the Soul will languish and grow seeble: Charity well order'd begins at home. I must not for others, neglect the most important affair of my own Salvation.

So

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Omy God, when I am in the privation of the lengible (weets of your prefence, and find a drynels on my Soul, it seems to me not hard to bear it: Lut when I am ravished with enjoyment, to be call different to mind other business, this seems to me more difficult and mortifying. We may strive to have the like content in other affairs, but our infirm condition will not suffer it; and do what we can, we fall short of the sweets of such enjoyment. It remains then to make an excellent act of abnegation; and by an amorous resignation of our will to Gods, make it our contentment to have no other contentment than Gods good pleasure, who will not have us to be disturbed to want enjoyment.

And thus we offer up to God an excellent Sacrifice, feeing we give to God what is most dear and precious to us, by dying to our selves, to live to him. I am therefore resolved to fall a working, without troubling my Spirit too much with the Ideas of Affairs, that I may still conferve an actual endeavour to practice on diversolcations and maxims of Christianity and Evangencal Councils, by self-denyal and a love of Sufferings for Christianae. And it I continue in this Spirit of actifice and entire abnegation, it will make me content with that little Service God requires of the, being unworthy, by reason of my fins, to be advanced to greater performances. He is indeed our Soveraign Lord, and he may be do with his Creatures what he pleases.

But whatever we undertake, let us have a care to do our works for God with purity of intention;

refignation, which may prove to us of more

worth than the conversion of Souls.

When we are in the heat of oar Affairs, it much concerns us not to let them deface in our Soul the incomparable Idea of the Interiour of Jesus, which is the Copy we must endeavour to write after; in imitation whereof, we always find sufficient matter of glorifying God, which is the only pretention we ought to have both for Time and Eternity. In this Abis of Perfections, I find how to behave my self in Prayer, in Action, in Affairs, in Contempts, in Temptations, in Aridities, in Disconsolations. And without the Idea of this Divine Interiour, we do but blunder in the way to Perfection, and seek our own esteem and excellency.

There are in Spiritual Persons three sorts of Purity. 1. Purity of Conscience. 2. Purity of Virtue. 3. Purity of Persection. Whoever is careful to avoid sin, even those that proceed from Frailty, has purity of Conscience. Those who on all occasions practice Virtue without a mixture of nature, have Purity of Virtue. And those who being divested entirely of themselves and the creatures, endeavour purely to practice the persect acts of Virtue, are arrived to the purity of Persection. By these degrees of Purity, we may discover the different states

of Virtuous Souls.

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A Mini bra a commen CHAP. VIII.

The presence of God brings us into a difesteem of other things.

A Frer God has manifested himself to a Soul, making her to see that he is all; the Soul enamour'd on this adorable presence, takes no rest but in him, finding her self ill at ease without him, who is all in all unto her. O how Powerful is this Divine Idea to withdraw a Soul from all Creatures, that the may be united to her all! How does the happily loofe her felf in this great all! O my God, fays the, bow true is it that you are all, and I am nothing! Dear Lord, what can we do for you? You are all, and have no need of our goods, Of the all of our Souls,

bow little are you known and beloved!

I know not what men intend in not having their thoughts taken up about him who is our all. Where art thou, O my Soul, when thou art not in this all? Without doubt thou art in nothing; for as long as thou art in thy felf, or in the Creatures, thou art in the depth of nothingness. The content I have in that God is all, is more, as it seems to me, for him, then my felf: For my joy is to know him to be what he is, before I was any thing. O great all, be you for ever what you are; and that you shall be our all everlastingly, does comfort and ravish me.

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CHAP.

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I see that God is not only all, but that all Glory, all Grandeur, all Beatitude is in him; neither loses he any thing by his communications to his Creatures. He takes infinite Pleasure to do good to them by his mercy, and no less content is he to punish them by his Justice, because they deserve it, for nothing can disturb his

happiness.

O what Felicity is it to a Soul that loves God purely, to be affured that God shall be infinitely happy to all Eternity, and that no malice of man can alter his Beatitude! Such a Soul is greatly pleased to consider the contentment God takes to make her live, to make her die, to keep her in Health, or in Sickness, to supply her Corporal necessities, and furnish her Interiour with all Graces. For God draws great Glory to himself by all his Creatures. Be comforted then, O my Soul, and be not disconsolate, seeing that God is always happy. Be not troubled for any thing, seeing that every thing which corments thee may bring Glory to God. Do not value any thing but God alone, seeing in his presence the most excellent Creatures are as pure nothings. Tanquam nihilum ante te.

Tis easie and pleasant for a Soul to value nothing in the presence of God, she finds in him her Soveraign good; all her faculties having in him a tast of her repose, their joy, their satisfaction, and blessedness. God has created them for himself; he is the only center of the Understanding as the Soveraign Verity; he is the sole center of the Will, as the Soveraign Goodness; and the Memory finds in no other Object full

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contentment. All the several Truths, and Goodnesses, and Beauties, and Persections in the Creatures do but encrease her thirst, God alone can give her satisfaction; and this she learns only by experience, This experience is of marvelous efficacy to detach her from all things that is not God, and when once she hath had a relish of his sweets, she will not return to creatures, nor to Exteriour Actions, but

with fubmiffion to his Will.

How is such a Soul crucified in this state, by reason of the condition of this Life, in reference to Corporal necessities and Worldly assairs! Passions, Aridities, and Distractions keeping her off from God, will not suffer her to tast and enjoy him, this much afflicts her. I know very well that the love of the Cross, and resignation to Gods will does comfort her, and an indisterency to any state whatsoever keeps her in peace and repose. Notwithstanding this, she is not in her center in such a manner as she shall be eternally. She is but tending thither, and so being as yet in privation, must needs be in a suffering condition.

Accultom thy felf, O my Soul, to be prefent with God in thy Interiour; quit all Crearures, for this Divine Bridegroom will have no
Rival, he must have all thy heart. His grandeur and infinite perfections will not admit of
other Lovers. Look upon him often with an
eye of Faith, and he will lead thee into his
Closet to enjoy him in Peace and Silence. O
my Soul, it would be happy for thee, if once
thou didit accustom thy felf to have attention

Lib. 2. Christian.

riour of his Holy Inspirations. Thou wouldst then follow blindfold his Divine conduct, without much standing upon reason or humane prudence: But give ear to God alone, and follow his motions, without any reflection on self-interest. Thou knowest that God is all Goodness, all Wisdom, all Power, and this is sufficient to

banish all vain sollicitudes.

lought to live in Peace and Denudation of all Creatures, relying upon God, who alone, ought to be all things to me. I ought to make it my confolation to live without confolation, if God will have it so: And be content with what portion of Grace he is pleased to give me. The more we participate of the states of annihilation of Jesus, 'tis better for us. What though we want all things else, if God be with us? A Soul that has God in possession, cannot value the absence of other things.

CHAP. IX.

Where we may best find the Presence of God.

The will fearch for God as we ought, we must not have recourse to the Creatures, but we shall find him in the fond of our Soul, where he resides in a peculiar manner, raigning, ordaining, and instructing us. The Soul by the help of Faith finds him there, as also by some feelings and experiences, accompanied with such a peace, all the World cann't give her. God

God alone does communicate this Peace to a Soul by his presence, for his dwelling is in Peace, which is a certain fatisfaction the Soul receives thereby with full contentment. A Soul that hath found God, hath nothing else to do, but to fubmit and commit her felf wholly to God both for the Interiour and Exteriour; and her Fidelity confifts in this perfect abandon and refignation; because now being absorpt in God, she is to live out of her felf, and her own will and interefts. So as when God does all in a Soul, he does much in a little time; and this is when the is annihilated as to her own frrength and interefts, in a total dependance on the operations of God. In this state she is free and indifferent to all things, and difingaged from her felf and all Creatures, and wholly taken up with God, who works in her what he pleafes. Her principal devotion is to have attention to God prefent, and to receive his orders and impressions, be it in Prayer, or the practice of Virtues, or other affairs. If bufiness, or the Creatures, put her out of this state, she presently has a care to put her felf in again, by a perfect submission to Gods will

God thus present in us, conducts us by his illuminations and instincts, directing us, correcting us, strengthning us, doing for us what he pleases, if we be faithful to his motions. But a Soul yet attach'd to her self, and the Creatures, do not understand him, nor perceive his directions; for only pure peaceful Souls are sensible of Gods acting in them. A Soul that is free, and in possession of God, is diversly employ'd;

ploy'd; sometimes on God and his Perfections. fometimes on Jesus and his Mysteries, or on some Christian Verity; sometimes she is discouraged with her defects, and then again comforted and strengthned with the Power of Grace; other times the feels Interiour Sufferings, and afterwards is refresh'd with the enjoyments; now in fervour of devotion, and then again in aridities of Spirit; but always the same in dependance on God, and submission to his will. ought therefore still to regard God in us with the eye of Faith, fuffering our felves wholly to be possess'd by him, giving our selves up to him without refervation, loofing our selves in

him by a happy forgetfulness.

God is in his Creatures, and there we may find him; but his presence in the Interiour of the Soul is in a more special manner: There is his Holy Temple, where he pleases to dwell, and where the Soul may fee and taft God with a suavity transcending all sensual delights and Pleasures. A Soul thus conducted by the light of Faith, and attracted with this Divine weetness, seeks to find God in this his Sanctuary, and converses with him in such a familiar manner, as makes the Angels stand in admiration. Now it is when the Soul can make pure Prayer, seeing here's nothing but God and the Soul, without the intermedling of any Creature, God working all of himself, without representations, or discourse, or semble gusts of devotion.

This supreme purity of the Soul being not capable of sensible things, the pure Spirit only

Lib.z. The Interiour can possessit, and God present communicates his illustrations, irradiations, and all necessary motions to effect this pure union. The time feems thort in this happy and experimental enjoyment of God; but the condition of this life affords no other; where we must live with peace, patience, humility, and croffes; leaving for fome time the sweets of this pure union for other affairs, to act, and fuffer, and practife Virtue, O thrice happy that Soul, to whom God is pleas of to youch fafe this experimental manifestation of himself, of his goodness, and sweetnes! O what peace arises from thence. what high efterm, and defire, and love of God, and his Divine perfections!

Let such a Soul be in light, or darkness, in peace, or war, elevated or dejected, she is still the same, because God's will is hers, and the defires nothing but what pleases him. Her chief care is to give her self up wholly to Gods will in so great variety of Interiour states. And why should a Soul be concern'd at this variety? For if I purely defire to please God; 't will be all one to me, whether I do it by suffering or en-

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That we ought to give our selves up with confidence to Divine Providence.

Dear Lord, draw the passions and affections of my heart wholly after you. O that I could go out of my self to abide only in you! Oh that I had no love but for you, no fear, no desire, no joy but in you, and that my affections were only for you! O that your Grace would mortise in me the sears, hopes, sadness and desires of nature, that you might be the sole Object of my love! This is the purity we must aim at, or else we possess our Soul in vain.

Our bleffed Saviour saith in the Gospel, That one Sparrow shall not be forgotten of God. Why then have we such fears to want, who are chiefly call'd upon to rely on Providence? If God permits us to be in want, 'tis to bring us to perfection by sufferings. God is pleas'd to give us daily his precious Body, and will he deny us Bread? I cannot believe it. All thoughts to to the contrary are from the Enemy, or nature sollicitous for the things of this Life. My confidence ought to be in God alone.

Though it happen that we fall into troubles, temptations, or fickness, which seem to deprive us of the good temper of Soul to attend to our devotions, we ought to abandon our selves to the good pleasure of God, and say; God only, and bis hely Will. If the Idea of some state of

per-

perfection presents it self to the understanding, if we make some resolutions upon the seelings of an actual favour, we ought the more entirely abandon our selves to God, and say, I define God only, and his hely Will.

This abandon makes a Soul peaceable and content, and dead to the World, to which though the may feel some motions of affection, yet they are troublesom, and gain no consent. In this state she is wholly absorpt in God, finding her repose in him alone, and out of him is no contentment. It seems to her that whatever accidents may happen, they shall not disturb her quiet, she is grounded in God her Soveraign peace: And though she may stell some emotions in the inferiour part, they do not reach the Superiour Faculties.

We must be perfect as God will have us, not as we will have it; the ways of God are far different from the judgments of men. The World believ'd that King Lewis must be Sainted by conquering the Holy Land, God made him him a Saint indeed, but not by his Victories, but his Captivity; not by his Triumphs but his Sufferings. We intend to Sanctity our selves by actions, and God will do it by afflictions. We must give our selves up to his conduct, absolutely abandon our selves to his Will, and only love

his deligns.

When shall I be so mortified to my own endeavours as to abandon my self wholly to Divine Providence? I must follow purely the designs of God, love only his good pleasure, put my considence in him, and he will have a care Lib. 2. Christian. 145
of me in such a way as shall be best to advance, his Glory. Doubtless' tis an effect of Grace in us, not to rely on our own Providence, but to depend chiefly on Gods assistance. We must therefore elevate our selves above nature, which relies on Creatures, and sears wants, and abhors sufferings, that we may put our sole considence in God. Whoever trusted in him and was consounded?

There be as well Martyrs of Providence, as Martyrs for Faith. They are more hidden, and sometimes suffer little less than the other; being content with all occurrences of Providence, which deprive them of their Goods, or Honours, or call their Lives in question for Conscience sake. And sometimes to enjoy God in a more perfect way, they despise and forsake the accommodations of this life, that they may Sacrifice themselves to God with the slames of Divine Love in Pious Exercises. Or if Providence has so order'd, that they should be born subject to Deseases and Miseries, they bear them with perfect resignation.

There be also Spiritual Martyrs whom Providence has order d to suffer much by Interiour pains. O how advantagious is it for such Souls to have an eye to Gods designs upon them, and be faithful therein! As sor me, the love of Gods will shall hereaster be the rule of my actions and undertakings. I will abandon my self and all Creatures, and put my considence in God

alone.

If our imperfections disturb our inward Peace and union with God, we must repair it without

too much disquieting our selves for our pass'd faults. Union with God is never without love, and love will blor out our Offences, and bring the Soul to repose in her wonted center.

CHAP. XI.

To be indifferent to all things, but Gods good. Pleasure.

One excellent effect of the Presence of God in the Soul, is to make us as it were insensible of all things, but Gods will. A Soul that is enrich'd with this indifferency, can defire nothing else; yea, not Virtues themselves, except in order to Gods pleasure. We must strictly examine our selves concerning this general disengagement from Creatures, and not easily believe we have it, except on several oc-

casions we find so by experience.

Our blessed Saviour vouchsafes me extraordinary attracts to be wholly his. He puts me into a state of wonderful Interiour peace and quiet; so that it cost me little to do Virtuously. I aspire after dear Solitude and holy Poverty. My Health is but seeble, and in probability my Life here cannot be long, and therefore I endeavour to live so disengaged, as if in effect I was already dead. My dear Jesus insufes into my Soul a Spirit of denudation, and I do cherish it; that I may live no more in my self, but my continuance in this Pilgrimage may be beneath me, and I without any gust or affection to it.

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So that at present i suffer not a little to fee my self so far from God amidst the distractions and necessities of the body, and other affairs incumbent on me. For when God manifests himself to a Soul, experimentally rasting his infinite goodness, to live here below is a paid unto her. However she continues in great Peace, because in her Interiour she is purely resigned to

Gods good pleafure. vig vadiagouls avail vada

I am so habituated to have an eye to God alone, and not to please my self, but in him, and to have no joy but for him, that I cannot rejoyce to see my self persect; nor be sad at my impersections. God is my all, his will, his pleasure, and nothing else. All resections on my self seem to sully that Purity, wherewith I ought to love him who is essentially good and persect. I know God is arreadous God, who will admit no Rival in his love; and that with great reason, because he is only truly amiable as our Soveraign good. O that he was loved according to his Beautynt danot.

My Soul is inflamed with a great defire to disengage her self from all Cheatures, that I might wholly be busied about God alone. I see clearly that this is my principal concern, and not to meddle with other affairs without necessity. For a Soul whom God attracts to a sublime union with himself, must cut off abundance of superstuous thoughts, discourses and occupations, or else she will be lyable to a thousand amusements. For my part, I often say to my felf; Come my Soul, let us to our principal works and let the rest alone, that does but estrange

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This life will feem a little abject, and will not be so pleasing to many, who are for unprositable recreations: But will be amiable to such who are wholly taken up with the exercises of Divine love in a beloved retirement. For they have thougether given themselves up to the good pleasure of God, and love nothing but the accomplishment of his holy will:

This perfect abandon is wrought in us by pure love; and this pure love cannot raign in our hearts without a generous mortification to all Greatures, and a freedom from an attach to imperfections. This death doth work but according to the measure of our love to sufferings, which sufferings for God wonderfully unites us to him with the bond of Perfection. Purity, love, suffering, God, what would we more?

If Providence so order, I shall freely for sake my solitude, though most dear to me. I will endeavour to die to all things, to apply my self wholly to Gods pleasure; and sacrifice my self, and whatever I have to his holy Will. Has he a mind to reduce me to my first nothing? If he will have it so, I am content: Will he have me in a suffering condition? His will be done; neither will I complain, but have recourse to Jesus Suffering for me on the Cross, and rest contented with his good pleasure.

A Soul that loves God and his Will more than the Creature, is content and peaceable in all events, seeing Faith assures her that the will

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Christian. Lib. 3. of God is accomplish'd therein. She embraces miseries and afflictions as proper means for her fanctification, and discovers more clearly therein the good pleasure of God then in prosperity. O my Soul, we must now give our selves to God in good earnest indeed, by embracing contempt and poverty, forfaking the vain respects of the World and sensual delights, to expose a Penitent, poor, hidden, abject life, fo contrary to worldly men. Methinks hitherto I have had but Ideas, now I defire to fall to the practice of Perfection, after the example of St. Elizabeth. While she was a Princes, how did the abhor the life of Worldlings, and what love had the for a poor abject life? O my God, when shall I give you the practice of so many excellent truths, whereof you have given me the knowledge by heavenly illuminations! O my God, speak powerfull to my heart, and make me faithful in my obedience; take from me all other things, and attach me entirely to your good pleasure.

C HAP. XII.

We ought to comport our selves with a respectful reverence in God's presence.

A Soul that sees God present with her by the light of Faith, will often times feel in her self the great veneration she has for so infinite a Majesty and Benefactor. She cannot but have a respectful regard for all the inspirations

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The Interiour Lib. 2, and secret advices conducing to persection, all good desires which come from God; yea, she has a reverence and love for Crosses that come from the hand of her Soveraign good. The Soul in this state is peaceable, and may so con-

tinue a long time.

Omy Soul, remember this well, and when any thing comes into thy thoughts, which thou believest to be an inspiration, cherish it with great respect, and be faithful to the designs of God upon thee, according to the measure of their manisestation. O what irreverence wilt thou be guilty of, not to be Faithful in such cases? Above all, be content to look upon crosses and humiliations with respect and love, and hold thy self happy to be accounted worthy to suffer for Christs sake. Vobis datum est, ut in

Jesum credatis, & pro co patiamini.

God ispleas'd to manifest to me with what dispositions I ought to walk in his presence and in his ways,; namely, humility, patience, longanimity, simplicity and purity. When we find our selves in good disposition of heart, humility makes a Soul to esteem it highly, be it never so small; and thinks her felf happy to have it, because she deserves nothing; yea, is rather worthy of eternal punishment. This will free us from fadness and discouragements, when we see others glittering with greater Graces; and pulls down our pride from exaking our felves higher than God will have us to be. Moreover by patience the Soulis well composed, and labours after perfection with courage and per-Gyerance, be the time never to long before bng God

Christian.

Lib. 3. God bestow on her the gift of Prayer. By longanimity the Soul fuffers and supports her felf in her defects and imperfections, fo that felflove shall not discourage her in her endeavours. Simplicity makes her still to have an eye to God, and to follow his conduct; whereby as

length the arrives to Purity.

Our chief work must be to do Penance with all humility; and if God gives us not the gift of Sublime Prayer and eminent virtues, to abide peaceable in that little we have, and we hall find favour in the eyes of God. What we ordinarily want is a noble generofity to support crosses, and surmount the contradictions we meet with from nature in the occasions of Fidelity. These difficulties make us timerous and fearful; but we must be content to be feeble, that the Power of the Grace of Jesus Christ may be glorified in us. When I am weak, then am I strong, says St. Paul, Virtus in infirmitate perficitur. This acknowledgment of our weakness does wonderfully humble us, and opens our eyes to see our own poverty, and the great need we have to relie on the Grace of Jesus Christ.

I find that God requires of me to be Faithful in these following practices.

1. First, I must be very indifferent to whatsoever it shall please God to do with me; and to be content either with action, or suffering, being attens wholly to his good pleasure. Why therefore should I long after the Graces of others, because great and glorious? Tis enough for me to bless God

- 2. When I find my self in indisposition of Health, I ought to value it, and not for sake my usual Devotions, nor have reconsse to such refreshments as satisfie sensuality: But to take pleasure for once to make bold with my body, that hath often made bold with my Soul. Notwithstanding this must be done with discretion.
- 3. I must rejoyce at crosses and difficulties which I meet withall, as affording matter to practice many great virtues, which prepare the Soul for great graces, and make her worthy of great love. What God pleases to give oftentimes to his best Friends in this life are fair occasions to suffer for Christs sake by a generous renunciation of what the World most affects, and nature most desires.
- 4. I ought to be strongly perswaded that I shall be so far rich in virtue, as I shall be poor in worldly goods; provided I be faithful to the Grace of my pocation, which invites me to be dead to all things but only God, I must therefore have a care not to harken to the arguments of humane prudence, which still finds pretensions enough to shan contempts and sufferings. Our sensuality does much retard us in the way to perfection, but humane reason more, being more subtile and powerful to perswade. The only remedy is to abandon our selves to the conduct of Grace, and sall in love with the solly of the Gross,

CHAP. XIII.

To give our selves up to the conduct of Gode Spirit.

of a Spiritual Life, by binding our felves severely to this or that way, but sweetly tollow the motions of Gods Holy Spirit. We must row against the stream of our corrupt nature, but not strive against the wind that comes from Heaven. Work we must but by following Gods holy Inspirations, which are sensible enough to holy hearts; a Soul accustomed to the conduct of God's Spirit, does know his motions, I cannot explicate this as I would, but 'tis an assured truth, she knows them by ex-

perience

I must wholly depend on Divine Providence, without any dependance on Creatures, though holy; casting my self into the arms of God, as an Infant that takes no care but to lye in the Mothers bosome, to suck the teat, and delighted therewith does love her dearly, I confess our blessed Saviour treats me after this manner; for without any sollicitude of mine to nourish my Soul with Spiritual food, or without any searching into Books for that end, but only in his Sacred heart, I experience that I want nothing; which sometimes does strike me with admiration and fear, that I have been negligent to do my duty. But this fear does pre-

provide for me, before I thought on't.

This makes me know experimentally, that God will have me wholly depend upon him. without any support from Creatures; for if I feek to them, his care diminishes, and my Soul falls into indigence, finding little fuccour from the Creatures she had recourse to; which makes her foon retire to the Paps of Providence, and this suffices. A Mother sometimes has milk in one Pap, and not in the other; if the little Infant will change, he is deceiv'd; but finding little help from the left Pap, he returns to the right, and now will not quit it, being grown wife by experience. My Soul thus finding little help from the creature, returns presently to the Pap of Providence, and there abides.

I fear sometimes to have too many consolations in Prayer; but this does satisfie me, that God will have me live as an Infant, that stands in need of such comforts. He make choice of other Souls for great performances that regard his glory. If an Infant should leave the bosome of his Mother, to do her service, he would fall and hurt himself, and do no good. He must then let others work, and be content with his Mothers embraces. Wherefore what I have to do, is to stick close to God, and let others travel in great affairs, as more grown up in grace, in comparison of whom a little Infant is nothing but weakness.

My perfection confifts in my fidelity in a perfect abandon of my felf to God; which will increase, Libez.

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increase, as I advance in the ways of God and his designs. I must therefore be in a manner paffive, and in my thoughts, defires, actions, dispositions interiour and exteriour depend on the pure conduct of God and his pleasure. A Soul well illuminated, loves not the dispositions the finds in her felf, but God who gave them, and his will is the fole object of her complacencies; it being all one to her to be in this or that disposition as best pleases God, and loving nothing more than a perfect abandon of her felf to his Providence.

O dear abandon! Thou art at present the object of my love, which by thee is purified, augmented and enflamed; who foever possesses thee does know and tast the amiable transports of great liberty of Spirit. A Soul loses her self happily in thee, after having loft all Creatures for the love of abjection, and finds her felf no where but in God, being dead to all things befides him.

O dear abardon! Thou are the disposition of dispositions, and all other do refer to thee, Hap. py are they that know thee, being of more worth than all other graces. A Soul in abandon hath a pure regard to God, and is not concern'd but for his Interests; yea, desires not abjection, nor any thing else but Gods good pleasure. Few words cannot explicate the great effects that it works in the Interiour, to establish a Soul perfectly in God. 'Tis abandon that makes her infenfible in all kinds of accident, and nothing but the loss of abandon can afflict her.

You

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You are admirable, O my God, you are admirable in your holy operations and affentions that you make in Souls, whom you conduct from light to light by your Divine Providence, which is not known but by experience. Sometimes it feem'd to me that the grace to love abjection was the highest pitch, but now I see that abandon mounts the Soul to a more elevated state.

O dear abandon! Thou doubtless wilt be the ultimate disposition. I desire nothing but thee and death, as the gate whereby to enter into an eternal abandon. Dear death, how pleasant and lovely dost thou seem unto me! What allurements do I see in thee! Deliver me from my captivity, that I may fully enjoy my well-beloved. However if thy coming will interrupt my abandon, come not, for thou art nothing in comparison, and all thy delights will be bitter to me.

O dear abandon! Thou art the beloved of my heart, which ardently breaths after thee. But when shall I know that I possess thee perfectly? This shall be when the Divine will shall raign perfectly in me. For my Soul shall be established in an intire indifferency to all events, and means of perfection, when she shall have no other joy then in God, no other content, no other felicity.

abandon'd to his will, Think upon me, and I will think upon thee. That is to fay, let thy care be to be doft in me, and I will take order for thy affairs. Such a Soul does not spend much time to Y

Lib. 3. Christian. 157
in the things of this Life, but in the praises of God: Her exercise being a pure consideration of Divine Providence, in whose arms she quietly reposes her self, fearing nothing but insidelity.

CHAP. XIV.

How the perfect abandon of our selves to God, makes us find a Paradice upon Earth.

So much as a Soul is faithful to this abandon, fo much doth she abound with consolation. For she is content with the state wherein Providence has put her, and is well-pleased with all God's Ordinations concerning her self, as are most for his Glory, and has a tender love for the Decrees of God's will, who from all Eternity has determined to conduct her in this way, which she would not change for one more elevared, though one sigh would gain it.

Moreover, such a Soul takes much delight in knowing that many Souls are conducted by more excellent ways, whereby God may be more glorisied. For seeing she desires purely the Glory of God, she is well-pleased that God is glorisied by others, and rejoyces at it, saying with great resentment, Omnis spiritus landet Dominum; Let every spirit praise our Lord, every

way, every state.

This resentment somewhat resembles that of the Blessed in Heaven, where the Angels rejoice more at the Glory which the Seraphins render Lib. 3. Christian.

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to God, than at their own service. And that great difference which an Angel sees between himself and a Scraphin, does not raise in him the least desire to be a Scraphin, and his joy is greatest, in that the Divine will has made him only in the Order of Angels. Thus it ought to be with holy Souls on Earth, who participating of one anothers good, are content with the graces God bestows upon them, and sees no good dispositions in themselves or others, which

is here!

There is but little difference to be in the flate of bleffedness, or in a perfect abandon to God's good pleasure, because there is nothing can afflict such a Soul, and she can want nothing that contents the heart. Great Saints do not wait for Paradice with impatience, having in a manner found it upon Earth, by a perfect abandon

does not comfort them. O what profound peace

to God's good pleafure.

O holy Virgin! how were you content that your Son should ascend into Heaven without your company? Had not you as much right to sollow him, as the holy Fathers detained in Limbo? They were his Servants only, but you his Mother also, and yet you remain upon Earth to partake of Miseries, and they mount to Heaven to possess Joys eternal, and a Crown of Glory. How different is this distribution! Your own dear Son, holy Virgin, vouchsafes to go to Limbo, to affish the holy Fathers, and carry them from thence with him; and you who are so near him, who have ferv'd and accompanied him during his mortal life, even in his Passions

fions and Ignominies, now he is full of Glory, leaves you here.

And, what I more admire, you amorously acquiesce in this abandon, and are content to want his corporal presence with spiritual joy. O what marvels do pass in your Soul, O admirable Mother, which transcends our understanding! All that we can discover, is, that you are as well content with the privation as presence of Jesus; to remain in fernsalem among his Crucifyers, as the company of Angels who sing his Praises, when it is the good pleasure of God, and the Eternal Father has so ordained.

O my Soul! when shalt thou be perfectly abandon'd to God's good pleasure? Dost thou find thy self as equally content in privations as enjoyments? When wilt thou be satisfied with all events, disengaged wholly from what is not God, and value nothing but his good pleasure? Seeing that the Mother of God is content to be deprived of the visible presence of Jesus, because he will have it so, oughtest not thou to desire solely the will of God, with an indifferency to all things else? If thou might st choose, thou ought st rather to embrace Desolations, than Consolations; Neglects and Contempts, than Honours and Endearments; seeing fesus and Mary have most loved a suffering life.

But this perfect abandon, this holy indifferency to any state, this union with the good pleasure of God, is yet a Mine of greater Treasures. 'Tis the sublimest, purest, perfectest disposition that can be in the Soul; 'tis of more worth than other dispositions, and they without

imperfections. Contemplation, a desire to be charitable, a will to help our Neighbours in spiritual things, are good and holy disposition, however God does not always require these of us. When God is pleased to leave a Soul in aridities, poor and desolate, she would be unfaithful, if then she should attempt such matters: but union to the good pleasure of God can never lead us to impersection, but always elevates us in grace, and therefore ought to be permanent in us.

When a Soul has lost all, she may believe the has lost nothing, so that she lose not this disposition of union with the will of God; which indeed cannot be lost, if our hearts be elevated above all earthly things. Such a Soul can say truly with some great Saints, Dens mens & omina; O my God! you are my all, in possessing you I

bave all thingselfe.

How ignorance we, in complaining of the dols of whatever this world affords, seeing the dols of them, if we be not our own Enemies, may make us find a more pure union with God's good pleasure! For we never advance more in virtue than in a state of denudation. And if we defire nothing but the will of God, and are content with that, whatever it be, we can want no disposition to persection.

its proper worth, they are good and pleafing, and ought to be valued, though some have more excellency in themselves than others. But we must be content with those God is plea-

fed

Christian. 161 fed to vouchfafe us, in peace, submission, humility, and indifferency to every state, repofing our felves in the will of God, as in our

center. A Soul in this flate fomewhat approaches to the Peace and Felicity of the Bleffed in Heaven.

CHAP. XV.

How the Beauty that is in the Order of God contents a Soul.

Never yet have well understood this verity fo often repeated; Not one bair of your head shall fall to the ground without the will of your Heavenly Father. The clear and full underflanding of which will make a Soul happy on earth, and the croffes which before did afflict her Spirit, will be a joy unto her, and cordial comfort: For then the tasts the wonderful sweetness contain'd in the order of God to bring her to Happiness; so that Paradice without this order would be as a hell unto her, and to be in a suffering condition with this order will become a Paradice. The order of God is all in all unto her, and without it all things are as nothing, feeing the's only content with the will of God.

The Soul that truly understands this Truth, lives always well pleas'd in the changes of this Life, observing therein the order of Gods Providence, wherewith the is well fatisfied, and resolv'd to be indifferent to every condition. If

we'be not content with a low vocation, as we'll as with great Graces, it proceeds from interest and self-love. Great Saints of God, your ways are high and sublime, and mine are low and ordinary? in which, however I live well pleas d without aspiring after your elevations, because

I tafte a sweetness in Gods order that contents

my heart.

To abide in interiour peace and tranquility with submission to the Orders of God, by a strong union with his good pleasure in all things, is not the work of a day, we must fight couragiously many years with all sorts of enemies, be one we can gain so great a victory. In his judgment, there's nothing more dangerous than to leave the order of God, and to aim at greater things than he will have us. But a Sour content with Gods good pleasure is well pleas diwith any state, wherein is no Sin, nor beloved imperfections. But our Pride is the solved imperfections, but our Pride is the solved in perfection, or run too fast to that which God discovers to us by light from Heaven.

A pure Soul must define nothing but the pure satisfaction of God, and not her own interest, though she find in ster self much impersection. Jesus Christ, to whom she has absolutely given her self such as she is, is all persection; this is enough for her, she will find in him her repose, her stanquility, her beatitude, without troubling her self too much with her defects and sailings. I know not how it comes to pass, but I am content and impersect both together; and

yet

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yet my imperfections do not please me; neither by the Grace of God shall they disquiet me. Ido not seek for the object of my contentment in my self, but in my God and Saviour, the only love and center of my Soul.

CHAP. XVI.

The practice of the Presence of God, for the seven days of the Week.

He folid foundations of a Spiritual Life are Mortifications, pure Virtue, to shun excess of business, though never so good, to converse with Holy Persons; but above all, Prayer and the love of Solitude, which affords more liberty to attend to the one thing necessary. The Soul that loves, cannot but fuffer at the absence of her Beloved; and therefore love sets her to Prayer, to make him present. better to converse with God, and entertain him with amorous discourses, the applyes her self fometimes to the Being of God, fometimes to this or that Divine Perfection, confidering him as the Being of Beings, who only is of himfelf, and before whom the whole Creation is nothing. Sometimes her Meditations present him to her all-powerful, with his only word creating and conserving all things: And then again she considers him as infinitely wise, ordering all things by his wonderful Providence: Sometimes as infinitely merciful and patient, bearing with our manifold fins and provocations: And then again as infinitely loving and amorous of our Souls in a manner unspeakable. Sometimes

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as infinitely just, hating iniquity with an implacable aversion, not sparing his only Son, being a Sacrifice for sin: Lastly as infinitely good and merciful, pardoning our innumerable sins and transgressions. Each day of the Week may take up one of these considerations in mental Prayer, if God do not suggest to the Soul some other matter of Meditation.

The first Day.

The Being of God.

Sit To, that we live, move, and are continually in the bosome of God, In ipso vivimas, movemur, & Jumus; and yet think so little of him? He vouchfafes to dwell in our hearts, and our hearts run after Creatures to rest in them, that is, in nothing; for the Being of all things is nothing else in respect of God but as shaddws about us. What takes up the greatest part of the World, does confift but in imagination, as Honour, Dignity, Praises, Reputation oc. so much beloved and admired. There be other things have a Being to our Senses, vifible and palpable, yet but corporeal and corruprible, to day here, and gone to morrow; however poor Creatures as we are, we fet our hearts upon them, as it they were eternal. There are other things whose Being is more permanent and elevated, above sense, as universal Verities, which confift in the understanding, however not eternal nor immense, nor without defect. defect. O my God, I elevate my self, as I am able, to find you, and I discover that your Being depends not upon imagination, or sense, or reason, but you are above all this, Incom-

prehensible.

O Eternal Being! You never had beginning, nor ever shall have end. O infinite Being! You are nothing of what we fee, or know here below; You are an Infinity to whom nothing is wanting, to whom nothing can be added, from whom nothing can be taken away; Your Perfection is Infinite. O immense Being! You fill all things without extension, without quantity, without parts or composition; 'tis You alone in whom is the eternal fource of Life and Being. When I fearch for you, if I go out of your felf what do I find but privation and nothing? O my God, what damage, what annihilation is it, when we fall into fin or imperfection? For this is to go out of our Being, to plunge our selves in the Abis of nothingness. Ad nibilum redactus fum.

Omy Soul, wilt thou always commit folly? Wilt thou daily run after deceits and vanity, that is, the Grandeurs and pleasures of this World? Wilt thou continually tire thy self to follow a shadow that slies from thee? And wilt thou forget God, the Being of Beings, who is every where present, and offers himself unto thee? O my God, so take me up with your presence, that I may forget all other things to

think on you, my only Happines,

The second Day.

The Omnipotency of God.

Souls within the small limits of created Beings; 'tis a flavery to be tyed to the intollerable yoak, which the World and Vanity impose on their Servants; 'tis a Hell to be precipitated into the dungeon of exorbitant Passions and filthy Vices. But 'tis a Paradice and glorious liberty, to be taken up with the Thoughts of God, where we may walk at large, finding all in him to be infinitely great, his Goodness, his Beauty, his Sweetness; and to apply our selves to admire sometimes This, then That

perfection.

This day, O my Soul, let us contemplate the Omnipotency of God, wherein we may behold fo many wonders. O how the effects thereof are admirable in the Production, confervation and operations of all Creatures! Tis by this Power the Immense Machine of the World's upheld upon vast spaces of nothing; his by Ir the Heaven and Stars observe their motions without deficiency, the Elements and Plants, and Animals are constant in their Productions. Without the influence of this Omnipotency, no Creature could subsist one moment, or have any operation. In a word, so great is this Power, that in an instant it could by one silent word produce a thousand new Worlds

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out of nothing. O Divine Omnipotency, how
little art thou considered, and yet how able to
ravish all considering hearts?

Omy Soul, let us consider that we are always in the hands of an Omnipotent God. Shall we then be discouraged with the difficulries we meet withall in this Life of Miseries? Shall we be assaid of our own fraisties and weaknesses, and the Power of our Adversaries? Is not Omnipotency able to uphold us? Who can pluck us out of our Heavenly Fathers hands? If God be for us, who can be against us? This is our hope, this our comfort.

Omy God, I am very sensible what a weak Creature I am, and how Potent are my enemies; but this does not terrify me, because You, my strength and supporter, are Omnipotent, in whom only I put my trust. Omnia possum in eo qui me comfortat, I can do all things; as St. Paul assares us, through Christ strengthing me.

The third Day.

Of the Wisdom of God.

My Soul, let's this day contemplate the Wisdom of God, which is able to ravith us, if we consider a right the beautiful order of the Universe. O what admirable Occonomy is there in the order of Nature, of Grace, of Glory! O how all the dispositions of the Divine Wisdom do appear therein most wonderful!

derful! We cannot seriously restect or meditate on any of Gods works, but we shall find his Wisdom to be incomprehensible, and this does ravish a devout Soul, and makes her often cry out: O my God, how well is this done! how wistly is that ordained!

If my Soul fixes her thoughts in Heaven, to contemplate there the admirable order of that Holy City, in the various ranks of Angels, the Leveral Glories of the Holy Patriarchs, Apostles, Martyrs, Confessors, Virgins, who are themselves transported in admiration of the Divine Wisdom herein, can we but cry out, O infinite Wisdom, how profound art thou in thy dispositions! If from Heaven we descend to Earth, how is the Soul ravish'd to observe the unspeakable bounty of Divine Wildom in the order of all things, bringing about the great work of mans Salvation fo infallibly and sweetly? To see God himselfina manner annihilated to purchase for finful Creatures Infinite Grandeurs by his Humiliations, to behold the triumphs of the Crofs, of Jelus Crucified, over the World, fin, and hell, and the powers of darkness; to see and confider these things, must needs make us cry out in admiration of the Divine Wisdom incarnate, O sapientia; que de Calo ad terram descendisti! Of Wisdom, which descended from Heaven to earth, what wonders have you wrought for mans redemption? of one offer and

Soul, wilt thou render, what returns wilt thou make to God for all his benefits and ordinations concerning these We must conform our selves to the

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the Divine Will, and say, O my God, righteous are
you in all your ways, 'tis well done, because so order'd by your Insinite Wisdom. Do we live, or
die? are we afflicted, or comforted? Sit nomen
Domini benedictum, Seeing God will have it so, his
Name be blessed. The consideration hereof, O
my Soul, will teach us patience and resignation in all the events and changes of Mortality.

The fourth Day.

The Patience of God.

My God, how long is your Patience, how profound and unfearchable! Who but a God of Infinite Patience could fuffer daily fuch provocations and contradictions from mortals, and yet continue to do them a thoufand favours, to perswade them to amendment? O patience of God, how art thou unspeakable, how are thou unconquerable! Omy God, you, know those who will hate and Blaspheme you eternally, and yet you bear with them, vouchfafing them your Sun, and Light, and daily Mercies, still calling upon them with your holy inspirations to return unto you for their everlasting good. Sustinuit in multa patientia vala ire. Your patience is wonderful to finners; we must blame our selves when we perish eternally.

On what side soever I cast my eyes from one Pole to th' other, I see God every where offended, contemned, contradicted, provoked,

blasphemed, and in all the infinite triumphs of his patience sweetly working the Salvation of Sinners, O what a long series of patience do I observe in the course of my Life? To bear with me so many years wallowing in the mire of my sins, when I deserved by Justice to have been cast into Hell: To pass over all the resistances I have made to his holy inspirations: To have waited and conducted me by his mercy to repentance. O ye infinite Patience of God towards me! Tis to you I owe my Salvation, or else I had been long since a lost creature for ever.

Are we not ashamed to see our passions and impatience with others, when God, notwithstanding our manifold provocations, is so long-fussering towards us? A single word, and sometimes our sole imagination does put us in choler, and we contend in heat, without containing our selves 'till our anger be over. O my God of Insinite patience, if you should thus deal withus, what would become of us poor crea-

tores?

The fifth Day.

Of the Love of God.

Omemy Soul, let us walk this day in the pleasant and vast extensions of Gods love; the holy love of our merciful God, a love in comprehensible, which is from everity to evernity; as large as his Essence, and the self-same thing within; where ever 1 am, I find my self-last

Lib. 2. furrounded with the effects of this infinite Love. Omy God, I sometimes contemplate you as good to us, and confider you as in your Creatures, which you youchfafe me for my use and delight: But now I have an eye to you, as you are in your felf, and I find my felf so in you, that I cannot go out of you, for you environ me on every fide; you are in me, and out of me, and I cannot go from you, but I must go to you. How art thou beloved, O my Soul, how art thou beloved of God, with an affection furpassing the love of a Mother to her Children? The most she can do, is to carry them in her bosome with a tender affection, which is fometimes wanting: But God does lodge thee in the midst of his heart, and will never forfake thee. O what benefits and mercies dost thou receive from this Infinite goodness!

Alas! when shall I live in God alone, and not in my felf, that he may only reign in my heart? O my God, I confess and acknowledge that you have the fole right to possess my heart entirely, and 'tis most mine, when 'tis wholly yours; but be pleas'd, dear God, to defend your right, which the World would take from you against my will. O how miserable am I. if I fet my affections on any thing beside you, knowing that this is my duty, and my Happinefs.

O my God, from this moment I for ever forbid any Creature to possess my heart. Hark hither my will, I now give thee this express command; that thou open not the door of my heart

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The fixth Day.

The Justice of God.

To take a prospect of the Divine Justice is not less pleasing to good men, nor less admirable. Thou wilt see it, O my Soul, governing the whole universe. The throne of this Divine Justice is established in Heaven, the arrests are pronounced on earth, and the execution thereof in the regions of darkness.

Tis Divine Justice that sets a Grown upon heir heads who have fought the battles of the Lord of Hosts with courage and sidelity: And for these momentary and light afflictions rewards them with an eternal weight of Glory. O Justice crowning and glorifying us, how lovely art thou!

Tis Divine Justice that thunders Comminations against sinners on earth, to bring them to repentance by the terrours of everlasting sufferings, and sometimes chastises them with temporal afflictions, that they may not be tormented to all eternity. Oamiable Justice, that treats so here poor sinners, as to make them Penitents, and not miserable!

But O how terrible is the Divine Justice, which in hatted of fin does punish eternally those who will not be brought to any amendment? O how does a tevere, but just Sentence

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condemn such to everlasting slames, always devouring, and never consuming them, which the breath of Gods anger has kindled, and shall never be extinguished! O my God, you did not spare your own Son taking our sins upon him, to show us the better how to detest sin. O who can but tremble, considering your severity? O who dare provoke the Almighty to anger? Quis novit potestatem ira tua? O my God, I do consider this, and slie for resuge to your Mercy.

The seventh Day.

The Mercy of God.

Divine Mercy, how dost thou ravish my heart? Tis to thee my Soul will sing eternally, Miserecordias Domini in aternum cantabo; In my retired thoughts I look upon this World as a great Hospital, fill'd with some sick, some maimed, some lame, some blind, some languishing some incurable; and Divine Mercy goes a visiting of them. These she encourages, those she comforts, binds up the wounds of others, and offers remedies proper to each misery, not absolutely abandoning any one, though never in so desperate a condition.

O amiable Mercy of our God, into what corner of the World dost not thou go, to exercise thy goodness? Are there any miserable Sons of Adam, who have not tasted the sweets of comforts? Who ever made his addresses to thee,

that

that hath not found most tender compassions in thy bosom? O my Soul, what must we pant after but the more then material embraces of this adorable Mercy? In what canst thou put thy hope and considence, except in the source

of this inexhaustible goodness?

The whole World is full of the Mercy of God, and wile thou O my Soul, afflict thy felf, and be discourag'd with temporal miseries and momentary fufferings? It is the work of Mercy thus to punish thee. Do not the Sufferings of this life, work for us a far more eter. nal weight of Glory? Art thou, O my Soul, terrified with the remembrance of thy fins? Confider God is a God of infinite Mercy, and defires not the death of a finner. He who refuses to throw himself into the arms of Gods Mercy, is ignorant, or elfe. layes not to heart, that Mercy attends the greatest finners to the last moment of Life for their Conversion. Milerecordia pua subsequetur me omnibus diebus vite mez. O my God; as your Mercy has prevented me, fo grant that it may follow me all the days of my Life.

Soli Deo sit Gloria.

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BOOK IV.

Of Solitude : and the practice of two excellent Retreats of ten Days.

CHAP. I.

Of the Beauty of Christian Solitude.

forts of Professions, whereof God is the Author; who though he be but one, doth nevertheless afford to his Church different states of living. It concerns us therefore to think very honourably of them all, and manisest as much by our words, but to betake our selves only to what God calls us. The excellency of other ways ought not to withdraw us from our proper Vocation. A Soul then may delight her self in beholding the Church as a most beautiful Medow, replenish'd with great variety of Flowers of singular virtue; and so taking complacency in all states of Life, to apply

quires it from her.

A Solitary retired life is fo beautiful, and has fuch charming attractives, that when the Soul has once experience of it, the finds there her Heaven upon earth. Being to take a farewell of one of my Friends; who was returning home, and having parted with him, this thought forthwith strongly ceaz'd my imagination. Alas, my God! when shall I return home to my felf, that is, to you? Seeing your goodness is more manifest in affording me a place in the Ideas of your understanding from all eternity, before time gave me an existence among created entities, now I am your Creature, let me confider my felf daily as in you, who are my inheritance and everlafting posses-To be be at home, O my Soul, is not to be with thy felf, but with God thy Greator.

O how great is the blindness of men, not to understand that they have no other Country but the Divinity, from whence they proceeded by their Creation! Inconsiderate Creatures, whether are you going? For my part I will return home to the Fountain of my Being, my true home who is great, beautiful, admirable, eternal and incomprehensible. O what joy is it to consider that my true home is such as he is! Is it possible, O my God, that you are the home and center of my Soul? Why do we not readily go out from the clogging crouds of Creatures, where we are in perpetual bansshment, to return to our home, the bo-

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some of our Creatour? What can I desire in Heaven or in Earth besides you, my portion

and Inheritance for ever?

Comfort thy self, O my Soul, considering that thou shalt return to the Divinity, thy glorious home, and in the interim rest content with Jesus, thy crucified home, and repose. O how amiable also, how great and admirable is Jesus crucified! My Soul can find no Peace but by resting in him, where nature tasts a bitterness a thousand times more sweet than all Worldly delicacies. Without him all other pleasures are but dreaming fancies. O Jesus crucified, the World knows not your sweets, the beauty of your sufferings is hid from their sight; they behold you on the Cross with carnal eyes; else next to the Divinity they would dis-

cover nothing more sweet and lovely.

Do not therefore stay me up with Flowers, but with Thorns; do not encompass me with Apples, but with Nails, because I languish with love. The beauties and sweets of Jesus pierce my heart, and I cannot fuffer more, than to be without fuffering in the fight of my fuffering and crucified Jesus. But some say, to suffer much is hurtful to us. Alas! do we find it hurtful to us to love much? Wherefore will ye that love crucifying, shall be more moderate then love-enjoying, which too often weakens the Soul, and fometimes wounds us to death? A too great folicitude about corporal health, is a fign we do not take up our abode in the wounds of Jesus crucified. We are never better then when fighing under the burden of the Crofs. God

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God beholding himself, takes infinite delight in his own perfections; out of himself he is alike pleased, to see those Perfections crowned in his Greatures. His mercy does triumph in the Blessed Saints and Angels, and his Justice in Hell. A Soul introverted in solitude with God alone, finds sweetness unspeakable in considering these marvels. She seeks also an excessive joy to see that the travels, and sighs, and sufferings, and blood of seeks are crowned with a Glory by the Elect on earth, whether it he by suffering or enjoying. When they conquer a temptation, the blood of selus is crowned. When they practice heroick acts of Virtue, the blood of sesus is crowned. All glory be to him both in Time and Eternity.

O Mortals, come and see, if there be any beauty, goodness and persection comparable to that of Jesus, our God and Saviour. O how lovely is he, and yet how little is he beloved? How great, and yet how despised? How infinite in his Persections, and yet how little known? O the only desire of my Soul, discover your self somewhat more clearly to me, that being ravish d with your Beauties, I may be solely taken up with your Persections. Shall any creature after this oblige me to regard it? No, my eyes shall be fixed on God alone.

Farewell then poor Creatures, I am above you; you shall never more amuse me; I leave you to place my thoughts on my Well-beloved. Methinks I feel his powerful attracts, drawing me out of my self, to possess him alone. My Friends, do not molest me any more; leave me

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in my felf to possess my God, and admire his Persections. You may serve him by helping ochers, but leave me to serve him in himself, I define none but him, nor to be taken up with any thing but him, seeing he is pleased to let me know it is his pleasure. Farewell Creatures, farewell Friends, farewell Devotes, farewell World, I am going to God, to unite my self unto him by a constant recreasy that shall never suffer a separation.

as if twee quality farts of Lefts.

Of the necessity of Solitude. Work

am relow'd on the Vigil of All Saints to mount up to Heaven, to congratulate their Happines, and beg their Charity; for furely they will be very liberal on their general Feftival, and my Soul hopes for great fuccours from them in her mileries. However I will chiefly follicit the Bleffed Hermith and Solitary Monks, whose habitation in this Life was in Defarts and Monasteries. I have a call from Heaven to address my felf to them, sto beg their Intercession, for some part of their Spirit of Introvertion, retirement from the World, and Interiour poverty, which is the true life of Holy Reclufes, being in a profound folitude of Soul by a denudation of all Creatures; while their Bodies inhabit the most secret Desarts.

Great Saints! what do you here upon Earth? You labour not to help others, being far remov'd from the company of Men; so that you from to be but unprofitable servants. Alas!

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how ill do sensual men judge of the Interiour of Saints? I tall you these are the great Servants of Godin who in their Desarts offer up continual Sacrifices to the Grandeurs of an incomprehensible Majesty, by prosound poverty of Spirit, and annihilation of themselves. And being in a depudation of all Greatures, their desires are for God, and him alone. This is the Happy state, this is the Patadice my Soul sighs after at present; to live so sequestred from Greatures, as if I were in the Desarts of Lybia.

Good Jesus, there's nothing impossible to your Grace, grant me this poverty of Spirit; and if Exteriour poverty be necessary to possess this futeriour whereof I speak, make me as poor as fold; if my Friends must leave me, I will freely part with them, and be content to be sorgetten in their affections for ever.

mod my God, settrange me from all Greatures, give me that profound poverty of Spirit, which methinks I understand, though I carinot express it. Thus dead to the World abifhall enter into the day of my Savioury for here's no enjoying of God; without a perfect denutation of all Creatures; But how that I genchis Treafure, who have the dominion of Temporal Possessia ons? I must either really quit them to gain this Jewels or possessiblem, as if liposses d'nothinge in The examples of the Bleffed in Heaven afford me both comfort and fatisfaction. The Saints are rich, for they want nothing, and notwithstanding they are poor in Spirit, because they continually annihilate all the riches of their glory in the presence of the great God, being

Libli4. being ready to part with their Felicity, and to be annihilated, if fuch was the Will of God. In this manner I must possess what I have, being prepared to part withit, when God will have the clears has eyes, to recover her Happi of ti

I observe that for want of Solitude, the Soul does not difcern the more fubrile workings of God in her interiour, which afterwards the discovers by experience. These are great Graces, but come to no effect for want of introversion and attention: I know well enough that Faith is sufficient to direct the Soul to attain to the knowledge and love of her Creator; But 'tis true also that the God of love has more fecret and in-time ways, wherewith the Divine Wisdom works the Soul into a temper, to make her sensible of his amorous embraces. O my God, how are you hidden in the fund of our Souls! And you do not difcover your self to us except in a perfect Solitude; when we are out of the noise of Creatures, God and the Soul being alone together.

O poor Mortals, how long shall your hearts hanker after the things of this World? Turn your felves perfectly to God, and fee and tafte how sweet he is. Happy are those moments, although but short, wherein we have a taste of the Divine sweetness, and partake of the effects of his fenfible prefence. Such a Soul will find in her felf a certain aversion and disgust of worldly vanities, a defire to leave them, a love of Solitudeand Silence, to be the more at liberty to attend to Gods Service ; all other things now appearing to her but as drofs and dung. and

and of no value. Speak to such a Soul of worldly affairs, and you seem to cast dust in her eyes, which hinders her from beholding the heapties of her Beloved; and as soon as she can, she clears her eyes, to recover her Happiness. This inconvenience makes her sice from the World, to preserve her purity from being sullied with the dust of Creatures.

When we leave our Solitude by the order of God to converse with men, we find our selves better disposed to the practice of Heroick Virtues, to a persect contempt of riches and honours, to patience in cross affairs, to the love of enemies, to an affability, condescendance, and fidelity to our Friends: Thus expressing in our actions the Image of Jesus Christ, by faithfully complying with the occasions of Virtue. Pluse Mortification, pure Virtue, these are the delights of a Soul, that hath conversed with Gost in a holy petitement, where she hath learn'd to love himpurely, and suffer for him.

not the soul being slone toperfor.

periodly to God, and tee and raffe. John Solitude.

Tofind by experience, that nothing more hinlinders our Salvation and Holinels, than to
die whelm our relives with multiplielry of Affairs, though lawfild, for as to look thereby the
times aloned for Prayer and Mortification, the
proper not the ment of a Spiritual Life. A gracious sout mon these ford to comport her felf in
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converse and action, as not to engage at all her affections therein; for God alone is the life of her Spirit; without whom the finds her self both poor and miserable. Tis God only makes our Solitude amisble, being a kind of participation of the Life of God, which consists in knowing and loving. This Solitary life is much endang red, and sometimes lost in a croud of Creatures; nor can the Soul approach to them without some spiritual detriment. She must therefore have a care not to leave her retirements, to sollow Worldly business, unless it be by some inspiration from God, or obedience to Superiours. In which cases if she labours to do good to others, it will be no pre-

judice to her felf.

You may give them a hearing, who tell you that 'tis not well done thus to retire from the World; for they may speak this out of Charity, but yet without a true knowledge and understanding of your way. To discern this aright, we must have a care not to confound spiritual maxims, fome whereof are proper for a Contemplative, others for an Active Life. Thefe are to be put in practice without partiality, for otherwise we shall much disorder the ways of God, and disquiet others. Seeing the Active and Contemplative Life are different, the practice must be different likewise. The Active requires to spend much time to do others good both Spiritually and Corporally; which cannot be done without abilities and possessions to relieve the poor. These possessions cannot be kept without fome care and trouble; and this care of different

of Temporals is suitable enough to the Active Life: But damagable to the Contemplative; which layes aside all Temporal Affairs; least they should divert them from their principal employment, which is the actual love of God,

and attention to his Divine prefence.

The Active Life requires possessions, to have wherewithall to give to the poor : Tisenough for the Contemplative, to have himfelf in pofsession, that he may give himself up wholly to God, whereby he possesses him with great advantage. Those that undertake this Solitary Life of Contemplation must expect sufferings on every fide; yea, some spiritual men will account them Sycophants. There's little difcourse of them, because they live a hidden life, and pass in a manner for unprofitable Persons. They live unknown, and die in abjection; and living a despis'd life, they are esteemed by too many but as the dust of the earth. And which is the greatest cross of all, if their Directors have not light and judgment in these matters, they force them to an Active Life, and fo bring them off from their way and center, with a continual rack and violence to their Conscience and Inclinations, The Devil Perfecutes them in their Solitudes, endeavouring to divert them by disgusts, or by Ideas of great matters they Mall do by helping others and that they ought toprefer the falvation of one only soul, before alt their Prayers and Contemplations!

inue confrant to the Solitude, to which they have a call from Heaven; unless God give them

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an Active Life. Holy Abraham did quit his Hermitage upon these terms, to search out his debauched Neece, to save her Soul. The truest Rule for Contemplatives, either to continue, or quit their Solitude, is to observe the instincts and motions of God in their Interiour, examin'd by skilfull Directors in those matters.

We must have a special care, that in the eager pursuit of the things of God, we do not withdraw our selves from the Divine Order concerning us in a course of spirituality. Our great efforts must be, not to do much, but to please God: And seeing God is pleas'd with a little from us (though all we can do for his glory is always very little; and almost nothing) we must be content to do little, since such is the order of his Providence. Let every one go on in his own way with indifferency, love and sidelity: leaving others Peaceable in theirs, with a great esteem of the Grace of God in them; and continuing on our course; it is no prudence to discover the actings of God in us, unless to such who are Practitioners in Contemplation.

Who has a call to Solitude and Contemplation, must free himself from Creatures as much as possible; shun discourses of News, and reflections on Worldly Affairs, unless constrained by necessity or Charity: For a little matter will darken the Soul, and hinder her from being elevated to God by Contemplation. To conclude, believe me, a true Contemplation must be endowed with profound Purity of Virtue, which cannot be attained by a constant Mortification

The Interiour Lib.34. of fenfual nature, which is no finall and a lan. ing Martyrdom. All Sill of the Hermite grappen the feltering, to fearer out his

The Occupations of Solitude.

A Ethinks for forme days pan I have had many inward motions inviting me to Solitude and Contemplation, which notwithflanding did not relish with me, because in such retirements we do little or nothing for the good of others. But we ought to carry our selves above such considerations, resolutely following the conduct of God, with a firm adherence to his Orders. In this faithful complyance with Divine Inspirations, consists the Purity and Happiness of our Souls; it being the principal work, and most advantagious means to attain to Perfection and union with God

O my God, I am in a manner good for nothing , you have not rendow'd me with great Talents for the good of others: But I must needs acknowledge your lingular mercies to me, in chriching my Soul with Divine love, and continuel apiring after union with you bet others do what you have fee them about, this sufficient for me, if the ardours of Divine Love inflame my hears. To have inflamed affections for your is my greatest work, but to bring my hears to such a Jemper, it must be gome like dry wood, being emptyed of humidiry, by a seperation from all Greatures. This 10 delire

Christian.

Lib. 4. defire of inflamed affections puts me upon purifying my heart; and the expectation of enjoyment makes me eager in the practice of Mortification, by embracing Evangelical Councels, and maxims of Christianity. Seeing poverty, contempt and croffes increase the flames of Divine Love, they are welcom to me, for I ardently define to fee them arise to their higheft elevationano non managa

I know a good Religious man, who in his Solicudes is in continual Prayer, not only by the elevation of his Spirit, but by union with God in a wonderful manner. My Soul finds great contentment in his discourse and conversation. In sickness his enjoyment of God is not so vigorous, nor his Peace of Soul fo favorous, though always great. Worldly conversations feem but as dreams to him, and when paft, they did only leave confused Ideas in his memory. A bleffed man doubtless while here on earth. And converting with me in simplicity of heart by obedience, he declar'd to me what wonder-ful enjoyments God was pleas'd to vouchfafe unto him

He told me, that to attain Purity of Heart, we must divest our felves of all affections to Creatures, and nor fatisfie our natural defires; which is a great Mortification; when 'tis continual. In fickness we must stand very much upon our guard, for we cafily relax, and yield too much to nature. Not to correspond to a known inspiration is gross insidelity, and much retards our advancement in a Spiritual Life. A principal point of Devotion, is by a punctu-

Christian. Lib.4. al fidelity to omit no occasion to practice virtue, whether of humility, patience, abjection, or any other. This Contemplative told me. that the choicest effect wrought in us by Reve-

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lations or Visions, is this punctual fidelity to

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Gods calls. The more than the square Tis an affair will take up the whole Soul, to free her self from any engagement with Creatures, and conquer her own natural Inclinations, that the may enter into the states of Jesus crucified, and into his ways with his Spirit, that is, with his intentions and dispositions. Let us, O my Soul, in the profound filence of our Solitude, often fay to Jesus: 0 Divine fesus, despised for me, contemptible, poor for me, a poor Creature annihilated for me a meer nothing. Terms which in some fort express the perfect union that the Soul ought to have with Jesus Crucified. And this union is the grand occupation of Solitaries. Indiab user labele h

In the Court of Kings, the Cooks and Bakers, and other meaner Officers labour more than a Gentleman of the Chamber, who has little to do but to attend his Majefty, as a Compan on rathen then a Servant. A Favourite has yet less employ, being admitted into his Prince's Closet, to converse freely with him, and entertain each other with mutual careffes. In the House of God, they who are appointed most for action, are not the greatest Favourites; those to whom God youchsales extraordinary vilits in Contemplation, labour less, and yet are more accepted by him Tis not for us to apply our selves top much to Exteriour actions of Charity, but to correspond to Gods Holy Inspirations, if he call us to Solitude, to attend on himself alone out of the noise of Creatures.

Is it not great pity that Temporal affairs should take up the best days of our years, and the choicest hours of our days, leaving us little time in comparison to apply our selves to the one thing necessary, the work of our Eternal Salvation? Twould be better for us, if we would allot more time to our Holy retirements, to converse with God by Prayer and Contemplation, and begin on earth what we must continue without end in ever Blessed Eternity.

C HAP. V.

How we may put our Soul and Senses into a Solitude.

Let us not deceive our selves in being content to receive the seed of Divine Inspirations, without bringing forth any fruit according to the designs of God. If we have a discerning Spirit in the ways of Grace, we shall soon discover that this our only affair, and all the rest is but amusement and folly. To nourish this Divine Seed in us, we must shun the conversation of Worldly wisemen, who are guided only by Carnal Prudence, and so being strangers to the Proceedings of Grace, leave in us more or less by their Discourse some Impression of their ill opinions, which will retard our advancement in the ways of God.

The Interiour

Lib. 4 100 To put the Soul into Solitude, we must resire from all Creatures, and put our felves ab. folusely in the hands of God, to do with me what he pleafes, and apply our felves to him slone with all possible endeavours. To be faithful bereini we must resolve to suffer much: for we cannot abide Peaceably in this Divine Harmitage without leaving Parents, Friends. Worldly Entertainments, Affairs, and to fuffer almost a continual Persecution on every fide. For one rolls your that it is an Hypocritical and unprofitable Life. Another, that fo much Solitude cannot be good, in that we ought to have some Charity for our Neighbour. But let them talk on, every one is to follow his own work, and the will of God, according to their vocation. The best and most noble imployment in the World is to converte with God, and do that on Earth, which the Saints and Angels do in Heaven.

inthomothe Deviloriscences a Soul in this face under fair presences? But the must stop he cors and quitall to adhere to her Soveraign sondrowhen be roughfafes so call her to atcond rendfimilatione, When God fave he will Inad a Spuli sen a Solicude, Decem com in Soliendinem with sol fingular diercy: For we that! find burfewinnish Worldprepar'd for the Croft, and inclosived orbigo through all the difficulties of a Life follopermatural LA Soul that is in fuch a bappy disposition, will live Solitary, not troubling then felf with the crystof others. When God anco speaks the workely so the beart, zwill make more impression on us than all the noise

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Lib. A. Christian. 10 to the World: It comes into my mind, that to be Faithful to the Call of God, which I have to Solitude, requires of me to spend fix hours a day in Prayer, and to comply therewith, to retire my self about five in the Asternoon, and eat little at night.

Methinks also I ought to observe a general Solitude, not only in relation to my Soul, but to my Interiour and Exteriour Senses; yea, when I shall converse with my Friends; and behold her, I conceive this may be done. Sacred Solitude confide in being alone with God, in a vacancy from Creatures, and whatever is not God. It seems to me then, when we discourse of God and his affairs, we make our tongue Solitary, and fo speak like a Hermit. When we will not give ear to any but Divine Difcourses, our ears turn Hermits. When we will not allow our eyes any Objects, but fuch as are pleasing to God, we put them into a Hermitage. The fame may be faid of our Memory, wholly taken up with Ideas of God and his Excellencies: Of our Understanding and will, imployed only in the knowledge and love of God. If we would often put our Senses into this Solitude, we should attain great Purity of Virtue.

A true Solitare does hardly touch the earth with his Feet, that is, all his stay with the Creatures is for pure necessity, his Conversation being with God and Heavenly things: I have Inspirations from God to Prayer and Solitude so frequent and powerful, that my Soul takes pleasure in nothing else. Methinks God speaks thus to my Soul: Be then Faithful to quit all Worlds

The Interious Lib. 4!

Moitsly shings, and I will condust thee into an Interiour Solinus, where no Creat wes shall bind devokes, and swill speak to the hears, which hall answers Of what will any Divine Bride groun speak; except of his Instinct Beauty and Goodness:

In a line of the conduct of his Instinct Beauty and but a speak of his Instinct Beauty and Solinus a speak of his land of his instinct and but the conduct of his land of hi

A Solitude, obr Retreat of Ten Days upon a nihe Infaltible Mystery of the Sacred to ton it severally bull rinity. Sold the sacred to the several when we discount of the sacred to the several to the sacred to the sacred to the several to the sacred to the

ply himself to the great affair of his Salvation, ought to have an affection for Solitude, as the proper School of Virtue; yet 'tis needlary from time to time to make some more seed tetreats, by separating our selves from all business and company, that we may converse with God alone, in a more continual Prayer than ordinary. I observe that there are divers manners to treat with God in Prayer, and a devout Soul must conform her self to the measure of Grace Bellowed on her, co-operating therewith with all humility and dependence, whether her Prayer be of higher or inferiour nature.

The first is, when the Soul by the light of reason discourses on the Principles of Faith. The second is, when in converse with God, she only beholds the proper objects of Faith by a simple view and apprehension. The third is, when

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when a Soul receives Supernatural Illustrations in the understanding, and extraordinary motions in the Will, to know and love God by the gift of Wisdom. And this passive and extraordinary Prayer hath many degrees, of which I have nothing to fay at present. A Soul experienced in the operations of Grace, will easily know to what fort of Prayer she has a Call from God, and will betake her self to it with great sweetness, submission and simplicity.

Spiritual Authors tell us, there be three forts of passivity. The first, not approved by them, is, when a Soul, yet very impersed in Prayer, expects extraordinary illuminations from Heaven, by neglecting to help her self with considerations suitable to her condition. The second, doubtful and call'd in question, is, when a Soul yet impersect, provides her self of no subject for Meditation and mental Prayer, but expects that God should furnish her immediately with matter for it. The third, good and commended, is, when a purified Soul receives Divine impressions in her Spiritual Exercises.

Tis also of high concern to observe well, that a Soul may be Divinely inspir'd to this or that undertaking, or kind of Life in such different ways, that to discern perfectly the Call of God,

will be somewhat difficult.

1. God sometimes works upon a Soul by bis Grace, joyntly with the Light of reason, to move her to those things, which do not transcend, but are conformable to the distates thereof.

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2. There are some things, to do which we can have no motions but only by the Light of Grace and Instinct of the Holy Spirit. But those whom we consult about them, ought to be experienced in Spiritual matters, and in whom the Light of Grace is more predominant than that of reason, For if those instincts are purely from God, the light of nature is no fit judge of Supernatural Inspiratious: From whence arise great troubles to persons fo infir'd, by meeting with contradictions on every side. A Director must be highly elevated in Grace, to discern between the motions of Grace and reason: And therefore 'tis no wonder to see some good men, of good judgment, not to relist or approve of some manner of extraordinary Devotion. folution and fidelity is requisite to follow such Instincts of Grace; for Sense and Reason, and their Partizans, (who are no [mall number,) will mantain strong diffutes with them.

I will begin my Exercises, taking God for my only Conductor; but nevertheless am refolv'd, according to the method prescrib'd to me by a Friend, on Gods behalf, to take up my thoughts principally with the Infinite and Eternal Perfections of the Divine Persons of the most Sacred Trinity, and set apart at least four hours a day for Prayer and Meditation.

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First Day.

The Etaking my felf to Prayer the first day, I was feis'd with aftonishment, that men fo little confider'd this ineffable Myftery. Yea. great Devotes are much taken up with it, but apply themselves either to the Saints, or the Mysteries of Jesus Christ, which is very well done; however this grand Mystery ought to be the principal Object of their Thoughts and Adorations.

O Mystery of Mysteries, foundation of all other Mysteries! A Mystery not only Divine, but God himfelf involv'd within himfelf. A Mystery of Beauties and Eternal Grandeurs. Mystery of Eternal Ravishments, in consideration of the Infinite Perfections of the Godhead. O Grand Mystery, too much forgotten by us, who think but little on these Infinite Productions. The greatest of Mysteries, and the most forgotten.

O my Soul, let not this justly be charged upon thee, but be often attentive to these eternal emanations, adore them continually, and fing on Earth the Song of the Angels in Heaven, Holy, Holy, Holy in Esence, Holy in Attributes, Holy in all his Ways, and all his Works.

This present Retreat will work much good in me, by putting me in mind of my Duty towards the adorable Trinity. Hereafter nothing shall appear to me so great and beautiful, as this

The Interiour Lib. 4. this employ about the most Sacred Trinity. The application to Saints, and Mysteries of Jesus must yield to this, and not appear while this possesses my Soul, nor take place 'till God is pleas'd to change this disposition.

In my fecond Prayer I confider'd, that my Soul was created to be an express and excellent Image of the most Sacred Trinity: God having made it Spiritual, Intelligent, and Loving, to exercise in her his Divine operations, which are the knowledge and love of God. Entring into this Idea, I confider'd, that the found of our Interiour ought to be a Pure Mansion for God himself and his Divine operations; and that the best-Prayer we can make, and most acceptable to his Majesty, is to annihilate all the Powers of our Soul in her operations, that God may work in us, who can only know and love himfelf, according to his infinite Perfections. That our understanding be not otherwise imployed, then to adore God present in his operations, and the will to confent thereto. That the Soul wholly apply her felf to Gods workings in us, corresponding in all things to his good will and pleasure, by a ready and faithful co-operation.

O how did I discover clearly the abuses most men commit by profaning the Faculties of their Soul, in employing them about Vanities and unprofitable Curiosities, as are for the most part our Worldly Affairs? We see not except in a Retreat and Solitude, how Worldly business hinders the actual knowledge and love of God, wherein consists the true Life of our Soul. O the happy condition of true Solitaries! O how

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Christian Lib. 4.

197 great Wisdom is it, to free our selves from Worldly Affairs, the better to mind the one thing necessary, that is, to live a life Divine. for which we were created! Let us, O my Soul. flie from distractions, and the amusement of Affairs, which engage us in a thousand Difcourses, Vanities, Extravagancies, and Weaknesses. Let us be Faithful, O my Soul, and give our selves up wholly to God, that we may live up to the end of our Creation. 10 10 1

In my third Prayer this Truth made deep im? preffion on me, that the most Sacred Trinity made Man after the Image of God, which afterwards being disfigured by fin, the same ladorable Trinity vouchsafed to imprint it anew, and more exactly in our Holy Baptism, when we are Baptiz'd, In the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost. We owe our Christianity to this impression of the three Divine Persons: We enter not into the Church, but by this great and ineffable Mystery, which

is the foundation of our Catholick Faith.

I do not see that the Sacred Trinity brings forth any thing created of a more noble Production than a Christian; the whole Machine of the World is less considerable, for the order thereof is only Natural, but a Christian is a Supernatural work, wherein it seems the most Sacred Trinity takes delight to be born as it were anew, by imprinting his Image in our Souls. Shall we deface this Image, to make our Souls deformed by some monstruous resemblance ?

of carefully preferving the Image of the most Sacred Trinity imprinted on us by Baptism, not considering the great Honour and Happiness we receive thereby, we deform our selves by sin, and deface this Image with unclean resemblances. O my Soul, when shall we be purified? Flie from the World, and betake thy self to a Holy Solitude.

For my fourth Prayer God was pleas'd to in. spire me with this thought, that my Converfation ought to be in Heaven already, that is, in God, for 'tis God is our Heaven, and 'tis in Hims ought to take up my Mansion; seeing 1 was oreated to confider his Eternal and Tempoval Affairs, and to contemplate his Infinite Perfections. I call the Eternal Affairs of God, his Divine Interiour operations; the generation of the Eternal Word, the procession of the Holy Spirit, and the Infinite Complacency which he takes in his incomprehensible Beauties and Grandours; the Eternal Defigns of the My-Reries of the Word made Flesh, which was to be accomplished in the fulness of time; in which however he took an Infinite satisfaction from all Eternity.

I call the Temporal Affairs of God, the execution of his Divine Decrees, touching the Mystery of the Incarnation and Passion of Jesus Christ, the Creation of the World, the Justification and Reprobation of Men, God before all time having Infinite Sallies in himself, by the Production of the Son and Holy Spirit, hath in time had Sallies out of himself full of won-

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ders and admiration. O my God, how a Soul enlightned from Heaven finds great joy and content in contemplating these Eternal and Temporal Verities, out of which all is but deceir

and vanity!

But how low Spirited are they, who never attempt the knowledge of these Truths? For my part, I will never more stand in admiration, to see the Holy Hermits sorsake the World, with intentions never more to return to earthly matters, when once they have discovered the Truth and Beauty of things Eternal and Divine. O my God, make me dead to the World, that I may live to you alone, and my Thoughts may be only taken up with your Persections.

Second Day.

Behold, what suddenly comes into my mind about this great and incomprehensible Mystery: I am wondersully content to be in a state of inability to understand it, in that the Powers of my Soul are led captive by Faith, surrounded with Clouds. This inability, this obscurity, this captivity are pleasing to me; and for the suture I'll believe that there is no better way upon earth to please God, then by submitting our understanding and will to his Revelations: Yea, I do more value this captivity to Faith in believing what I see not, than all Splendours imaginable. How is this submission

Lib. 4.

fion of our Spirit, naturally curious and inquifitive, pleafing to God! How much hereby do

we honour and glorifie him?

O glorious Saints, with all due reverence I challenge you to be more in love with your Eternal Splendours, than I am with these Clouds of Holy Faith. If you be content, I am no less, to be so happy as willingly to captivate my understanding to the high Mysteries God has revealed. And that which fills me with joy, and makes me happy before I come to Heaven, is to find my will in perfect submission to my God, and to the meanest Creature for love of him. O blessed Souls, I am a little too bold with you, yet I speak the Truth, and ye well know it. I aspire to Perfection of Divine Love, and this submission is the way to practise it. A way sure and excellent.

In my second Prayer, I yet found my Soul taken up with the Grandeurs of this incomprehenfible Mystery; and being almost lost in this Ocean of infinite wonders, was full of Faith and Sweetness, at the fight of such adorable Perfections, though all surrounded with clouds of darkness. For as soon as this Mystery presents it felf to the eye of the Soul, her light is obfcured, and casts our Spirit into a thick darkness, which yet brings with it a Light to see what reason cannot. Nox illuminatio mea, My night hath some day, and I perceive the Infinite distance between the Creator and his Creature; and being plung'd into the Abis of my own Nothingness, I acknowledge, Omy God, and adore your Grandeurs and Perfections, I admire, I love, I obey.

O my God, I adore and believe stedfastly what you are pleas'd to reveal to your Church. I neither know, nor comprehend, nor defire it. but am content with my ignorance and fubmiffion. Let us, O my Soul, abide as low and abiect as Grace can make us; for nothing renders us more pleasing to God, than profound Humility and annihilation. God who is infinitely delighted to dwell in his own Grandeurs, is alfo well pleas'd to fee an abject Creature content with its own nothing. 'Tis an error in Spirituality, and favours of felf-love, to fhun abjection under pretence to advance our selves in Divine Love. O my Soul, let us comply with Gods will, and march on in the ways of abjection, if God be pleas'd to require it of us.

My third Prayer pass'd on in these Thoughts; that the most Sacred Trinity being Eternally Knowledge, and Love Substantial, my Soul ought to endeavour to produce in her self anactual knowledge and love of God, the better to resemble this adorable Trinity. A Soul in the state of Contemplation, renders this honour to God in a more peculiar manner, enjoying God by the guift of Prayer in as transcendent a man-

ner as Mortality permits.

'Tis true, the prospect I have of this Divine Life here below, draws my Soul Powerfully after it, and I love it better than formerly: But I see that to persevere therein, we must be very poor in Spirit, that is, not only free from exorbitant Passions, but all distracting Images which pass by the senses that are not Mortified. News attended with curiofity, or the eyes at-

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The Interiour

Lib. 202 tached to sensible objects, or such like immortifications, fill the Soul with unprofitable Images, which make her uncapable of Divine impreffions, by corresponding to which we most be-

nefit our felves, and most glorifie God.

In my fourth Prayer I was taken up with a view of these amerous complacencies, and those Infinite joyes, wherewith the three Divine Persons replenish the Souls of the bleffed in Heaven. It feem'd to me, that the Happiness of the Saints was the clear vision of the Ineffable Mystery of the most Sacred Trinity; and to be made partakers of that knowledge and love, which is reciprocal among the Divine Persons. To see God clearly, is the Beatifical Vision

Alas! how ought we to be humbled, to confider how Infinitely we fall short in our Devotions of the continual Hallelujahs of the Saints in Glory! Yet this is the end of our Creation, and our hope is at last to bear them company. O how this life is poor and miferable, where all

is vanity and vexation of Spirit?

The view of my own weakness making me fensible that all I do for God is as nothing, what shall I say at the fight of my sins and unworthiness? I have nothing to say, dear Lord, but that I merit Eternal Confusion; which must needs fall upon me, unless your goodness have pity on me, according to the greatness of your Mercies. Can we imagine we can do any thing too much for God? "Tis for the glory of his Bounty and Goodness, that he is pleas'd to accept of our small service and endeavours, and Lib. 3. Christian. 203
reward them eternally. O how great a Truth
is it, that Grace and Glory are the effects of
his pure Goodness and Mercy vouchsafed to us!
Blessed be his Name to all Eternity.

Third Day.

That the three Divine Persons were Happy in Contemplation of themselves from all Eternity. When they created the World, the Preservation, and Government thereof does not at disturb their repose and Felicity. The Father is the center of the Son, and the Father and the Son is the center of the Holy Ghost, Three in One, and one in Three, Infinitely Happy in each other before all Time, and shall be to all Eternity. O what ravishing Beauties do they behold in each other, and what unspeakable Delights do they take in ther Infinite Persections? Nothing without them can interrupt their Joys, or add to their Happiness.

Tho true Solitaries who live the Life of God, in like manner repose only in him, and being dead to themselves and all Creatures, live only in him, to him, and for him. O Divine Life of Solitude! Thou art here begun on Earth, and canst not be persected but in Heaven. A true Hermits life is not a Sensual, but Divine Life.

God calling me to Contemplation, I will repare to Church, as to a Hermitage, where I may may live this Divine Life. The Plalmody there much rejoyces my heart, and lifts up my Soul to Contemplation. Through Natural Confiderations I have condescended to please others, against my own inclination; but now I have the Happiness to converse with the three Divine Persons, I can no more relish the Company of my Friends and Relations, except rarely, to maintain Peace and Union, or for some great necessity; and if they be displeased, I must not value it.

My second Prayer was an amorous attention upon what past Eternally among the three Divine Persons: How the Father knowing his Divine Persections did beget his Son, and how the Father and the Son by an Infinite Love did produce the Holy Ghost. The Father is an Infinite Ocean of Persections, by an Infinite Fecundity begetting his Son, and they being absorpt in each other, produce the Holy Spirit, by an everlasting flux and ressure of Love. This I did contemplate with great repose of Soul, and yielded up the Intellectual Powers thereof to the obedience of Faith, to receive some Rayes of Divine Light about such great and Incomprehensible Mysteries.

God then working in my Soul, I became passive, contenting my self to behold simply and sweetly the Infinite operations of the Sacred Trimity, and said within my self, Blessed Trimity know your selves, for I can do nothing towards it; 'tis enough for me to contemplate that mutual Love which is among you, which I believe and admire with adoration. It seems

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Lib. 4. Christian. 205
to me that no other Mystery of our Faith can so
take up and content my Soul, nothing being
more Divine than the Divinity. No other

practice is so charming to me, we being created to know that Knowledge, and to love that Love, which God has to himself to all Eter-

nity.

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In my third Prayer I consider'd, the Souls of Just Men and Blessed Spirits are as so many Sacred Vessels, into whom God insuses his love and knowledge by a continual emanation. Which love and knowledge returns to God, its source; as the water of a running Fountain rises as high as the Spring, from whence it had its Origen. This love and knowledge does establish God in us, and also does firmly establish us in God. So that God takes a delight and repose in the Soul, and the Soul finds her center and rest in him: Thereby faintly representing how the Divine Persons have a mutual repose in each other.

Empty Vessels are most capable to be fill'd: And by how much the more our Souls are empty of Self-love and Nature, by so much the more are they capable of Divine Love and Knowledge. A Soul in such a state delights in Solitude, and cares not to live in the thoughts and affections of men. What most saddens our Spirits, and retards us in the ways of God, is a natural aversion we have from a hidden life. For man naturally desires to be known and lov'd, and thinks life is as nothing without repute. And as long as we are full of this liquor, we are not vessels proper to receive the influen-

ces of Divine Love and Knowledge. Let us, Omy Soul, empty our selves of Self-love, that

Divine Love may take place in us.

In my fourth Prayer, I found an amorous complacency in my Soul, in that God being but One, doth subsist in three Persons, knowing and loving themselves, wherein consists their Felicity. The Father is the source of Being, the the Son the term of his Knowledge, and the Holy Spirit of his Love. The Son and Holy Ghost are from the Father: The Father and the Holy Spirit know the Son: The Father and the Son love the Holy Ghost. These are the wonders that make Heaven Happy. Firmly to believe them, is our Blessedness on Earth, and to Contemplate them continually brings solid consolation to the Soul.

I saw clearly that to dispose my self for this incomparable Happiness, I was to purific my Interiour, and to mortisie some natural resentments, which yet live in me: As namely, too great a sear about the loss of Worldly things, or to be despised by others, or ill success of Affairs; besides too great a sense of humane respects, and a backwardness to follow the instances of Grace for worldly considerations.

I know God sometimes suffers these Impersections to live in us, for the exercise of Virtue, and the Tryal of our Fidelity: However his will is, that we strive to be dead to the World and our selves, having our affections so six'd on Heavenly things, as to live a Divine Life in Mortal Bodies. Believe me, 'till our Interiour be throughly purified, we shall not not be ca-

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Lib. 3. Christian. 207
able of high contemplation, nor arrive to much knowledge in the secrets of God.

Fourth Day.

with the adorable Person of the Eternal Father. Methought I saw how he was ravish'd with Infinite Joy in Himself, with the Son and the Holy Spirit: And what complacency he also took in the Suffering of the Humanity of Jesus Christ, though he loves him with the same love wherewith he loves himself. And because these sufferings were pleasing to his Divine Father, as satisfactory for our sins, he did thirst to suffer more, to suffill his will. And therefore after such variety of dolorous sufferings, dying on the Cross, he cryed out, Sitie, I Thirst.

It much rejoye'd my heart to see what Insinite Complacency the three Divine Persons took in the Divinity, and said within my self, O Sacred Trinity, enjoy eternally these Insinite delights; But I desire as much as I can to add to your Exteriour Contentments, by imitating the suffering of my Blessed Saviour. And herein I will not have so much an eye to the reward, to please the Sacred Trinity, whom I adore.

Behold then what hereupon, it seems to me, God put into my mind. 1. To eat neither Fish nor Flesh, but in case of Sickness. 2. To Discipline every day: 3. To be pleas'd with occasions

of Contempt. 4. To despise all Temporal things, to sollow the attracts of Divine Love. 5. To lie down upon a bard Bed. 6. To cut off all Worldly Visits, and retire my self into a Solitude, where the World may despise me.

I consider d in my second Prayer, that the Son of God in the bosom of his Divine Father, in possession of Infinite Delights and Joys unspeakable, out of love to his Father, did quit his bosom, and cloath himself with Mortal Flesh, to plunge himself in the depth of Miseries, abjection and sufferings, that he might glorisie his Divine Father by his humane and suffering Life; and teach us Men, his Brethren, that the way to enter into the Love and Glory of his

Father, is by the gate of Sufferings.

Is it You, O only begotten Son of the Eternal Father, is it You born in a Stable, working in a Shop, dying on a Crofs? You that are all Splendor and Glory, the Light of the World, and the Delight of Heaven ? Is it You that are fo poor and abject, so void of Friends, so full of Disgraces, so scorn'd and despis'd? Is it You whom they efteem as the out-cast of men, and not worthy to live on the face of the Earth? O the Love of the Son towards his Father! O the strange invention of the Son to advance the Glory of his Father! O my Jefus, how admirable are you in your Divinity! Bur how ami-able are you in your Humanity! I desire, O dear Jelus, to follow you all the days of my life, and feek no other Glory than in your Crofs and Poverty, your Humiliations and Sufferings. Absit mibi gloriari nist in Cruce Domini nostri 7c/m

Christian . T Libdi4 Jelu Christing The Crofs of Christ is my Crown and

We ought not to posses Honours, Riches, and Worldly Preferments without Fear and Humility. Have we not cause to fear that in a frace of Worldby greatness Nature will feek her felf, and not follow Jefus, poor and humble, which ought to be done, either effectively, or in affection? A state of Suffering under the Cross is truly Glorious, and full of Interiour

Confolation bus asinus d minited avo aid day on of the Father with the Son, and of the Son with the Father, is by the Holy Ghost; a union Infinite and adorable on QuHoly Spirit, feeing tis your property to unite my heart fo intimately to the adorable Trinity present in me, that I may never fuffer a seperation; and

that this adorable union may be frequent in my Thoughts and Medications.

Bleffed be your Holy Name, my God, that you are pleas d to be so merciful unto me, as to take up my thoughts with this incomprehensible Mystery. O how do I begin too late, having been too long amuz'd with vain trifles! My past Life displeases me, and the course of the World is troublesome unto me, seeing it hinders me from conversing with you as I desire. Natural Necessities, as to Eat, to Sleep, to Recreat, are burdensom unto a Soul quickened with your Spirit, strongly inclining us to live here on Earth as in Heaven, in a perfect and perpetual union with your Goodness.

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The confideration which took up my thoughts in my fourth Prayer, was, that the Eternal Son and Holy Spirit feem d to have more commerce with men then the Eternal Father; because they appeared to us by external Missions, the Son being made Man for to die for us; and the Holy Spirit taking divers forms for the Service of man, and to enflame our hearts with Divine Love. The Eternal Father seem d always to remain in himself ravish d with his own Infinite Beauties and Perfections. O adorable Mansion of the Eternal Father within himself! O wonderful Missions of the Son and Holy Spirit towards us Men, and for our salvation, eternal matter of Adoration!

O my God, when shall I go out of my self, to elevate my heart to you, and converse with you? I see very well that to enter into a Spinit of Prayer, Retirement is requisite, Abstinence and Spiritual Exercises: And to conserve the same temper of Soul, we must practice silence as much as our condition and affairs will permit. If the Son of God and Holy Spirit did appear here upon Earth only for our good, certainly we ought to endeavour, to have our Conversation in Heaven, and adore the most Sacred Trinity for these Instinct Mercies.

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Y first Prayer past in acknowledgment and admiration of the Fulness of God. An Infinite Fulness containing an Infinity of Perfections, each of which hath an Infinity of Excollencies incomprehensible, A Fulness which is the Source of all good in the Greature, we being of our felves but a meer privation and pure nothing, full of imperfections, and lyable to Infinite Miferies. Alas! O my God, I now fee more then ever that you are all good, Omne bonum, you are the Source of our Being and Existence, and without your continual influx for our preservation, we should in a moment return to our first nothing.

The general Idea of this Truth is in every understanding but well to confider it, and lodge it in our Heart, is very rare. We believe this, as many other points of our Religion, but without deep reflection or correspondent actions. Hence it proceeds that we are without perfect self-denyal and abnegation, being not sufficiently perswaded, that of our selves we are nothing. And therefore God leaves in us many Imperfections unconquer'd, that we may know by experience, that we are of our felves

nothing but weakness.

O my God, for ever Bleffed be your Holy Name, for discovering to me your Fulness, and my Poverty. I adore your Infinite Fulness with P 2

Lib. 4. The Interiour 212 with a cordial affection, because it shew's your Grandeurs: and I am pleas'd with my Poverty because it humbles me in your presence. I am well content, O my God, to be nothing, that

you may be all.

Kneeling down to make my fecond Prayer, I defir'd our Beffed Saviour to take up my thoughts with what he pleas'd. And it came into my mind, to confider the three Divine Persons, as they are to teach other the center of all Happinels, repole and Glory. I beheld this fixedly, and with an amorous refentment and complacency of mind, it feeming to me, that the repose, the joy, and the Glory that the Divine Persons have in the Sacred Humanity, is infinitely below that repose and Glory. they have in themselves: And that delight they base in the Saintsoils much below that which they have in the Sacred Humanity. I sometimes adored mis Divine center in it felf; and fametimes Inadored lithe occupations of the Soul of Jesus towards this Divine center; and I endeavour'd to fix my thoughte with a complacency therein to nondefinition dealers and a

God then gave me to fee, that accidental occations of Charity are not repugnant to my Solitude and defigns of extraordinary Devotion: But to take upon me the care of a Family, and to have a continual eye over them, as I had formerly, was inconfistant with it. For that engag'd me to many Conferences, many Letters, much care and Extroversion; and for the prefent God does not require that of me, but calls me to a retreat, to Solitude, to Exteriour and In-Chin

teriour

In my third Prayer I discover'd how just and reasonable it is, not only to adore the Divine Life of the most Sacred Trinity, but also to Honour the Service which the Soul of Jefus render d to his Father on Earth by a continual and ineffable application. I observ'd that all the Mysteries of the Life of Jesus are honour'd according to the various applications of devout Souls as inspir'd from Heaven. Some have a special Devotion to Jesus, as regarding Mary Magdalen with an eye of Mercy: Others are much taken with his Divine Discourses with the Samaritan Woman and her Conversion: And shall we forget to adore the Divine regards and converse the Soul of Jesus continually had with the Divine Persons? There's nothing in God made man more worthy of veneration, this being his most noble employment while he was upon Earth.

Let us therefore, O my Soul, according to our Duty set upon this work without delay. Let our greatest care be to please Jesus; and then many Worldly affairs will become burdensom unto us. Let us recollect our Spirits and Affections from other things, and place them wholly on God our final Happiness. A true Christian indeed will be so generous, as to esteem all things besides God, not worth his labour. Tis true, while the Soul is imprison'd in the Walls of sless, she cannot always soar up to Heaven on the wings of Contemplation; but

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214 but this fhe must figh after, and considering her present condition, on all occasions exercise her

felfin works of Humility.

In my fourth Prayer God and his Perfections did possess my Soul, rejoycing in that he was perfect and happy. I had a mind then to take up my thoughts wholly with the Perfections of God, without any reflection on my own Interiour, or requesting any thing to supply my wants, for 'tis not seasonable to do this, when God calls us to contemplate his adorable Perfections. The Soul then forgets his own Interests, to

mind only those of God.

I then was pressed with a vehement desire, to forget my felf entirely, and have God only in my remembrance. I was then much pleafed with the multitude that followed Jesus in the Defart, taking no care for Bodyly Provision, Their Divine Master provided for them, being well pleas'd with their affection, in being only attentive to his words. What content was it to me to remember how Mary Magdalen forgot her felf, yea, in some fort our Blessed Saviour, in not ferving him in her Castle at Bethanie, by reason the was so intent on his Divine words? O'my Soul, let us not be too Solicitous for the things of this Life; if we think on God, he will think on us, and nothing necessary shall be Wanting to us,

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N my first Prayer my Soul found her felf much taken with the Beauty of those excellent words in the Gospel, Be ye perfed, as your Heavenly Father is perfect. I consider'd how impossible it is for Mortals even to conceive the Idea of an Infinite Perfection, and if we cannot conceive it, how can we imitate it? But God the Father has provided against this inconvenience, in lending to us the perfect Image of all his Infinite Perfections, his Eternal Son; and exposing him to our view, says to us, Beperfect, as your Heavenly Father is perfect; open your eyes and behold this Model, here is the Perfection joumust imitate, let it be your care to conform to this Exemplar, and you will be perfect as I am 'Tis hard to fay to what fublimity of perfect Perfection we are call'd by a Christian Life; and how glorious a thing it is, even to pretend to imitate God himself?

But alas! how far are we from the Spirit of this grand Exemplar? Jesus would have us to be annihilated, poor, despis'd, living a hidden life in Solitude, by dayly converse with God; But just contrary, we defire to appear in the World, to be esteemed, to have all things according to our hearts defire, and enjoy the Creatures. Alas! we do not sufficiently endeavour to dive into the inclinations of the Spirit of Jesus, to conform our selves thereto,

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and annihilate our own. The Science of Jesus is not well known, there are few persons that fludy it sufficiently; and fewer that practice it in Purity, and really aspire to form the true

image of Jesus in them.

In my fecond Prayer I did apply my felf to consider, how the son of God being eternally in the midst between the Father and the Holy Spirit, came down from Heaven to be a Mediator between his Eternal Father and us Sinners. He tells us, that no man can come to Father but by him, and that he is the way which leads to Happiness. And is it not a fad case that men should so much go astray? This is a low, and humble way, and they puff'd up with Pride will march over mountains in ways above them. This is a poor, penitential, suffering way, and they are for a way casie, deli-cious, rich and commodious. Is it possible to come to the bosom of the Eternal Father, except we will march by the way of his Son? There's no other way to come to him, and if we take our own way, at every flep we go farther from him.

O my God, how long shall my Soul lag behind, meerly in a way of nature? When shall we, Omy Soul, enter into Dispositions truly. Christian, and conform to the Dictates of a fupernatural Life? O Jesus, my Saviour, Redeemer, my Exemplar, my Way, my Light, 'tis only by following you, and your Divine Maxims, that we can enter into the light of Life. Of necessity then we must pass by Jesus Cruci-fied to come to the Divinity of the Father, and enjoy

My third Prayer was a continuation of like Thoughts. I then understood that there's no entring into Society with the three Divine Perfons; or arriving to such a height of Prayer, as thereby we may live in them a Divine Life, but by entring into communication with Jesus Christ, and conforming our Life to his ex-

ample.

This is a general Rule without exception. The Life of Jesus was a severe, self-denying Life. and ours ought to be of such an austerity, as may not ruine our health, or dull the Spirit, but humble the Body, to elevate the Soul. In a word, we must daily endeavour to humble and annihilate our selves, having only in our eye the Will of God: The Eternal Father cannot take delight in any Soul, that does not endeavour to resemble his Son.

It concerns us therefore to examine our hearts, to see how they stand affected to Sufferings on all occasions, If we cannot relish them, but slie and complain, 'tis to be sear'd, nature does possessus, and not the Spirit of Jesus Christ. Water in a glass remains quiet, but if it finds the least passage, it tends to its own element, from whence it can only be kept by force: In like manner a Soul that has overtures of Sufferings afforded her, will find an inclination to embrace them, if Jesus Crucisied be her center. It matters not by what means these occasions to suffer happen, whether by the imprudence of Friends.

Friends, or the malice of Enemies. Or her own neglect, or any other accident, she layes hold on the occasion, to unite her self to the abjections of Jesus, as to her center, Happy is that Soul which is in this temper, Grace and the Spirit of Jesus has wrought it in her.

In my fourth Prayer I went on to entertain my felf with the wonders of the Son of God. Ladmir'd that being in the Glory of his Father, he descended to our Miseries, that he might glorifie his Father in a new manner; by purchasing for him fuch holy Souls, who being animated with his Spirit, after his example, would be in love with Sufferings for Gods take I faw clearly how the Son of God by his Eternal Birthis most glorious with Infinite Persections; and bow he became Man, to be capable of sufferings for our fake: And that we must follow Jesus in his Humiliations, if we will be partakers of his Glory. O what dark Souls have they, who fee not these Glorious Truths? We live here a sensualor worldly life, or at most do follow the light of reason, rarely do we live a Christian, and very rarely a Divine Life. A thousand times happy arethey, who dear Jefus, are enlightned by you the true Light of the World

Jesus Christ cleath'd himself with a Mortal Body, that he might suffer, and be Sacrific'd upon the Cross; and we ought to bear part with him. The Saints who have known and tasted of his Spirit, have Marryr'd their Bodies by a thousand Ansterities. Others have wasted away by degrees in the slames of Divine Love. All have been desirous to suffer more or less.

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But we are afraid to hurt our selves, and are too apprehensive to endamage our Health. For whom do we keep our embraces, or for what is it, that we are so desirous to live long upon Earth? 'Tis a vain fear to think we shall shorten our days, by our endeavouring to live a Divine Life in our Mortal Bodies.

Seventh Day.

Began my first Prayer by a peculiar instinct of the Holy Spirit, bringing often to my mind those precious words of St. Paul, God bath fent the Spirit of his Son into our Hearts, crying Abba Father. And then I found that a Soul affifted with the extraordinary infusions of the Holy Spirit, is elevated above her felf; which is the effect of the gift of Wisdom freely communicated, whereby the fees and tafts the ineffable Mysteries of our Religion. O what a gracious gift is this! What a great favour is it, when God is pleas'd thus to communicate himfelf unto us! It then feem'd to me, that the faculties of my Soul ceas'd their ordinary operations, and the obscurity of Faith as it were vaaish'd; this Divine Wisdom elevating them in fuch a manner, which they cannot conceive who know not by experience, to a very fublime way of working, much above their ordinary proceedings. The Soul stands wondring at it, and can hardly believe the could arrive to fuch a point of Perfection. Then

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Then a Divine Light gave me to see at once my unworthiness to receive the Graces of God, his Goodness and Mercy to bestow them on me, and the merits of Christ whereby they were purchas'd. I was much amaz'd that God should vouchsafe so great favours to so wretched a sinner. And I did melt in acknowledgements, being humbled in my self, with an entire considence in the merits of Jesus.

I continued my second Prayer, and this Divine Light increas'd in my coul, and discovered the favours God vouchsafes to Souls; of which there are many degrees, according to

the proportion of their Purity of heart.

I. They see the Deformity of Sin clear enough, to conceive a borrowr and detestation of it; and know consusedly the Christian Virtues, the Mysteries of the Sacred Humanity, and Divinity.

- 2. They see more clearly some Christian Principles; as an Eternity of a Happy or Miserable condition after this Life; that our Salvation is our Principal concern, and the one thing necessary; and that all things else are but deceit and vanity.
- 3. They considering the Mysteries of Jesus, begin to discover the beauty of his Humiliations and Sufferings, which yet is shadowed with some obsentity.
- A. Their eyes being more open'd, they behold distinctly the Beauty of the Sufferings, Contempts, and

- 5. In persuance hereof they contemplate the Divine Mysteries, and if they be Faithful to imitate Christ Crucified, they will arrive to a great knowledge of the Divinity.
- 6. Then, if they keep close to Purity of Heart, they are wholly in a manner taken up with the Divine and Humane Mysteries of Jesus; being very sensible what an Instinite Mercy it is, to be deliver'd from the darkness of that ignorance, which is in carnal men, who have no feeling in the things of God or their Salvation.
- 7. Their Light increasing, they more and more discover the Persections of God in the Creatures, more clearly without comparison in the Sacred Humanity of Josus, but yet more transcendently in their Source, the Divinity; sweetly applying themselves thereto, with much Felicity.

Behold, this is what God gave me to know in a little time; and this Light will increase, if I be Faithful to practice the Virtues of Jesus Crucified; who is the True Way to the Divinity, the center of the Soul, and her pefect repose.

In my third Prayer I found my self in a disposition to admire the operations of the Holy Spirit in our Souls. God our Creator works in them what he pleases; he having endowed them with a certain capacity extraordinary to This must needs be extraordinary to our Faculties, which before had great difficulty in believing the Mysteries of Faith, and with great obscurity, and with little or no gust: But no success this Light darted into our Souls, but we see and tast them with great delight; not as in Glory, but in a very sublime and extraordinary manner. The Meditations of many years caunot attain to this, tis a special gift we must receive from the Father of Lights, to which we can only dispose our selves by Humility and Mornification.

Mortification

What Happines is it for a Mortal man to be thus elevated and Spiritualiz'd by the Holy Ghost? Let us therefore O my Soul, humble our selves profoundly, for the Spirit of God takes not up his Mansion, but in a humble heart. I know we ought to go whicher God is pleas'd to Callus, and not refuse his Gifts under the presence of a counterfeit Humility. But I know also that its not displeasing to God, for us to be careful how we entertain extraordinary attracts, least we be too ready, by innate Pride of heart, to walk in ways above our capacity.

In my fourth Prayer I consider d the admirable preventions of the Holy Spirit in the condoct of Souls: How he awakes us from the sleep of sin, and draws us from the love of the World, to inhite us to Himself by undeserved preventions Graces. What wonders are there, uslandown to Carnel men, which pass in these preventions of know nothing that may work in us more flumities. For would

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comprehensible Goodness.

I am aftonish d to see that any Soul believing these admirable preventions, should not be enflam'd with Divine Love. What can more humble a poor Creature, than to confider that we are nothing but Mifery, from which we can never free our selves, unless God prevent us with his Grace and Favour? What can more enflame us with Divine Love, than to confider that God then loved us, and prevented us with his unspeakable Mercies, when we were just objects of his Eternal Harred? O my God, who can comprehend the riches of your Infinite Goodness? O my Soul, acknowledge with thankfulness the great obligations thou haft to Love God with all thy Powers; and Loving him to Praise him to all Eternity.

Eighth Day. Creature is beloved of God Having

N my first Prayer this thought presently pollels'd my mind; that all Power is attributed to the Father, all Wildom to the Son, and all Goodness to the Holy Ghost: And sceing these three Divine Persons are in each other, by a Communication of the fame Substance and Infinite Perfections, the Eternal Father is the Power of the Son and Holy Ghoft, the Son is the Wifdom of the Father and Holy Spin ry, and the Holy Spirit is the Goodness of the Father and the Son. A pure Soul that lives in the sublime exercises of a Supernatural, Life, becomes a Mantion for the Divine Perfons, and receives from them the impressions of Power. Wildom and Goodness.

The Power of the Eternal Father dwelling in her, gives her frength and a Christian generofity, to conquer all the obstacles of Perfection; and the discovers that many difficulties are rather imaginary than real; infomuch as the Principal and the most difficult of Christian actions, is to believe that they are possible, and that nature shall not suffer so much thereby as.

is imagin'd.

The Wisdom of the Son cummunicated to her, affordsher Light and Overtures to defend her felf against the apparent reasons of sensual nature, which damp many excellent Spirits, that they can make no great advancement in the

ways

ways of God, because they have too much of humane consideration, and too little of this Divine Wisdom, which discovers to us the Beauty of Contempts and Sufferings in following Islus.

The Goodness of the Holy Spirit imprinted on her, makes her conquer the Inclinations of corrupted nature; which is more or less according to the degrees of Grace in us. He that is Holy, let him be Holy still; but we shall never rise to the heighth, 'till we come to Glory.

In my second Prayer I considered that the adorable Trinity is the Treasury of all Beings, Increated and Created: That in respect to the Divine and Uncreated Beeing, the Eternal Father is a Treasury that is exhausted by communicating all his Infinite Perfections to the Son and Holy Ghost: But in respect of Created Beings the Sacred Trinity is an inexhaustible Treasury, because all the whole World, or ten thousand more cannot exhaust or diminish the least drop of his Infinite Power and Goodness.

I was almost equally taken up with both these wonders. That a Million of Worlds, drawn out of the Treasury of Gods Omnipotency, should not make the least diminution of his Fower, is certainly matter of admiration. But much more that the Grandeurs of the Eternal Son should be so elevated above the World, as to exhaust the whole Substance and Perfections of the Father, as that he cannot beget another

like him.

Omy Jesus, how this Verity discover'd to me the Riches, the Glory, the Grandeurs of your Person

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Person! What Prodigious blindness has seis'd on men, as not to fee this, and not to esteem you above ten thousand Worlds? You appear poor, humble, and abject in their eyes, and nevertheless'tis true, the whole World is less

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than an Atomn in your presence.

I took for the subject of my third Prayer this admirable Truth: That the Eternal Father is the source of the whole Divinity, which he Communicates to his Son, begotten of his fubstance, yet without any Superiority or Authority over him by his Paternity: And the Son who receives all from his Father, owes him nothing of thanks, of fervice, or obedience. Not but that he knows his Father well deserves all these returns : But being of the same Substance and Authority with him, he is not capable to render these Submissions.

But the Infinite love he has for his Father, made him go out of himfelf, and put himfelf into an Interiour state by his Incarnation, that he might render those thanks, praises and services which he merited, defcending to those wonder ul Humiliations, and profound annihilations, whereby he might do homage to the Infinite Grandeurs of his Father. Teaching us by his example, that as the Son of God had no other means to honour his Father than by Humiliations and Sufferings; fo we should take up our Crofs and follow him, that God may be Glorified.

My last Prayer this day was a profound con-fideration of this verity: That all the works of the adorable Trinity in relation to the Creatures Perfon/

are common to the three Divine Persons. The Father, Son and Holy Spirit did concur in the same design of Creation, and Conservation of the World, though the Father alone begets the Son, and the Holy Spirit proceeds from both: But all three united imploy'd their Power to do us good, as if We had been the object of their Beatitude.

Is it then true, O my God, that all the Orders of your Providence by your united forces tend to our good, and shall we not have an eye to you? Alas! we little think on you, although the most serious Affairs of the World are nothing in comparison of our concern-to consider your Infinite Perfections, and love your incomprehensible Goodness. St. Arfenine saw this very well, when he quitted the Emperour, and would not so much as write to him. Those who are thus nobly imploy'd, cannot be taken up with Worldly Vanities. You fee a poor Hermit in the Defarts of Thebais, ill Clad, abject and unknown, who feems to the eyes of Flesh the fcorn of men; however his Soul is wholly taken up with God, which is of more worth than the whole Universe: You see a great Prince glittering with Gold and precious Stones, with a great Train of Courtiers, Honoured and Respected of all; and in the Interim his Life being only taken up with Worldly concerns, is guilty of the greatest Folly, and of no esteem in the eyes of God. Omy Go.

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Ninth Day.

N my Morning Prayer our Bleffed Saviour plung'd me into the Abis of our own Nothing and Vileness; insomuch that this exercise was wholly taken up with my own annihilation, Thereupon I said, None but the Eternal Father can give to bis Son, none but the Father and the Son can give to the Holy Gboft; and thefe Prefents made to each other, are Infinite. There pals among them Communications Ineffable, and proportion'd to their Grandeurs. I confider'd them in my Thoughts, and rejoyced, plunging my felf in the Abis of my own Weakness, in that I could do nothing for God, nor give him any thing. The best present I can make him, is to acknowledge I can give him nothing worth acceptance; and this acknowledgment I receive also from the hand of his bounty ; 'tis the effect of his Grace, for of my felf I cannot do learn of men: however be send is since it

O the depth of the Nothing of a Creature! If I should give my Life for God, 'tis less then if a Pismire should give hers for a King; there being an Infinite distance between God and a Creature. All the Angels and Saints that ever shall raign in Glory can add nothing to the Divine Grandeurs. The Abiss of my Nothing is beyond expression. God only knows it, and I see nothing of it but by his Grace. O my God, if all the Angels and Saints are as nothing before

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fore you, I that am infinitely below them, what

I can give is less than nothing.

My fecond Prayer went on in the same Thoughts and Confiderations. And I was much aftonish'd, in that being acquainted with many Persons, and seeing their examples, I was fo far behind them in Virtue. But looking parrowly into my felf, I must needs acknowledge that the least pittance of Grace, the least degree of Prayer, the least part I can have in the states of Jesus, is infinitely above my deferts.

Tis true, that a Soul inflamed with Divine love is confounded at the fight of her own unworthiness, and suffers a kind of Martyrdom. For in that the loves, the would do something for her Beloved, and being conscious what a Nothing she is of her self, and that she can do nothing; being in suspense between will and weakness, seeing in effect she can do nothing of her felf, the breaths forth her defires in fuch like amorous expressions: If I was God, and you, my God, a Creature, I would willingly be a Creature, that you might be God. But seeing this is an imagination of a thing not possible, her Martyrdom of love increases, and she languithes in that the loves, and can do nothing for her Beloved. That which comforts her, is, that being able to do nothing for God, the fees that he is all, and wants nothing; and taking a complacency in this, the repofes her felf quietly in the bosom of the Divinity, with full refolutions to abide there for ever.

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In my third Prayer I apply'd my felf to confider the Divinity it self, without forming any distinct thoughts thereof; but though so I saw nothing, yet I knew God more, then when I see him in his Creatures. They are always sinite and limited, and therefore the knowledge they afford of God is narrower, than that which I have of him beheld in himself. Often. times when we apply our selves to God to know him, we become stupid, and as it were without understanding. 'Tis our duty then to give our felves up into the hands of God, who does justly chastise us for our fins, by withdrawing himself from us. God is very merciful unto us to give us patience in this state; During which we must continue our Exercises of Prayer and Retirement, and rest as well content with these Insensibilities and dryness, as with illustrations from Heaven and gustful Devotion: feeing a Soul in either state is well pleasing to God.

A suffering Life is our Portion on Earth, that we may be conform to Jesus Crucified: For the union with Jesus Glorified is a Life more proper for ever-Blessed Eternity. O my Soul, let us not follow our own Fancy, but serve God in what manner he will have us, by a perfect refignation of our selves to his good pleasure.

The Eternal Song of the Saints in Heaven was the subject of my fourth Prayer. I consider'd with great delight, that all the Angels and Glorious Saints shall Eternally Glorifie the adorable Trinity with this Sacred Trisagion, Holy, Holy, Holy Lord God of Sabbath Methought

thought the first of the Seraphins began this Anthem with an admirable Air, and all the Choirs of Angels joyn'd their Voices, all Singing with a Tone more or less elevated, proportion'd to the degree they possess in Glory: And this innumerable multitude of Angelical Voices made a most Melodious and admirable Harmony, wherewith the Divine Persons were much delighted. It came into my thoughts that the Sacred Humanity of Jesus Christ, the nobleft of all created Entities, the Sacred Virgin, Mother of God, and Queen of Angels, with all the multitude of Holy Patriarchs, Prophets, Apostles, Martyrs, Confesiors, and Virgins did bear a part in this Sacred Harmony with great contentment: And my Soul being much delighted therewith, desir'd to Glorifie God as much as possible.

I saw that the Church Militant in a Holy emulation of the Church Triumphant, did use to the Glory of the most Sacred Trinity a like Canticle, repeating in her Divine Offices on all occasions, Gloria Patri, & Filio, & Spiritui Sancto, Glory be to the Father, and to the Son; and to the Holy Ghoft : And fo Heaven and Earth did Eccho forth incessantly the Glory of the adorable Trinity. I heartily wish'd that all Creatures had Voices to Praise God continually, and with much affection I often repeated, Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Ghoft. Tribus honor unus. Amen.

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Tenth Day.

This day beginning my Prayer, I felt my Soul prevented with an extraordinary Sweetness. I represented my God in the fund of my Heart as my Beloved, and I return'd him Thanks for his manifold Visits. My Disposition was then as a Spiritual Spring-time, I scented the Odour of the Flowers of Virtue perfuming my Interiour, and I made thereof a Crown for the Bridegroom of my Soul, and set it on his Head, and he seem'd to be much pleas'd with it; and my Soul took great complacency therein.

I observ'd that when the Spiritual Bridegroom comes to Visit his Spouse, whether it be in the Holy Communion, or by any Visit extraordinary, 'tis with different effects. Sometimes the Soul is as it were inebriated with Divine Love: at other times she has a seeling of great variety of Virtues wherewith the Interiour is Beautified, as a Garden with Flowers. The Soul is is not then taken up solely with the Sweets of Love; but being adorned with variety of Virtues, sometimes she presents this, sometimes that, sometimes altogether to her Beloved.

My second Prayer was a continuation of the same Thoughts: And I perceived that every step the Divine Bridegroom of our Souls made in the Garden of his Spouse, gave a new Birth to different Flowers. This is no small contentment

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to the Soul; but what ought most to affect her herein, is, that her Beloved is pleas'd to take with her his recreation, who delights to be sometimes with the Children of men. Then 'tis He refreshes us with the Persumes and Od dours of his Graces as Glorified; and we must

give our selves up to his Divine Will.

Other times he Vifits a Soul in this Crucified state, bringing with him nothing but Thorns and Nails, and Bitterness and Sufferings: But a Soul must not think that her Beloved is not then well pleas'd with her because of this rough usage, for this is his Will and 'tis best for her. I was much aftonish'd to see the excess of Gods goodness to me, who deserv'd to have been treated as an enemy. But he was pleas'd to unite me to himself with such ravishing transports, as transcend expression: O that I had a heart fo full of love, as might be answerable to the greatness of his Mercies vouchsafed unio to me! O Jesus, the Love of my Heart, if you continue thus, I shall die of Love for you. O amorous flames confume my heart to afheso that nothing may be found there but Love and Humility. Omy Friends, come and see, what great things God has done for my Soul.

My third Prayer was taken up with the amiable Communications that the most Sacred Trinity is pleas'd to have with our Souls. The Divine Nature unites the three adorable Person in the Sacred Trinity: The Person of the Son unites two Natures in Jesus: And Grace unites Jesus to purified Souls: And this unions of Grace and Love is persected by exerts

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cifes of Prayer, and wonderful communication in contemplation. This union sometimes is so high and elevated, that Jesus and the Soul seem to be but one thing, one Spirit, one Knowledge, one Love, and is in a manner the Soul of our Soul. And in this state she Gloristes God in a transcendent way, being wonderfully united to that Love and Glory Jesus renders to the Divinity, and the Divinity to it self.

The design of the Son of God by communicating himself to us in the Blessed Sacrament, is to augment this gracious union, that, as he Prayed to his Father, we may be one, as they are one. By which wonderful union he gives unto us a fulness of Grace and Divine Love, imprinting on us, (unless we be refractory,) the like inclinations he received from his Father, to keep us continually united to him by Love; and Honour him with the grateful Sacrifice of

our Humiliations.

My last Prayer was an amorous repose of my self in Jesus. Finding my self in this disposition, I dwelt upon it, knowing well that a Soul united to Jesus is transformed into him by amorous affections; and so Glorifying God, does Love, and Honour, and Adore the Divinity, by the Love and Adoration of Jesus Christ. The Soul in this amorous repose finds all her wants supply'd: As Courage in Adversity, Humility in Successes, Perseverance in Good Actions, and Grace to practice all those Virtues which God commands on all occasions.

By how much the more the Soul is thus amorously united to Jesus in Prayer, by so much

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the more does the participate of his Spirit and
Dispositions, and consequently is more in love
with the Cross and Sufferings. To have union
with Jesus Christ in Prayer, and to be divided
from him in our Life and Actions, is an illusion;
for one principal effect of pure Prayer, is to
imprint in us a love to follow the Life of

Tefus.

There now comes into my mind an excellent Observation of a Father of the Church; That the Holy Spirit having visibly descended to us as well as the Son, did not (as the Son,) visibly return to Heaven, but takes up his Mansion with us bere on Earth, to unite our hearts with our Heavenly Father, as in the Divinity he is the union of the Father and the Son. O Sacred Spirit of Love and Union, what confolation is it to my Soul, and what encouragement for my weakness, that you will vouchsafe to unite my heart to God, from whom you proceed from all Eternity? O Divine Spirit so unite me to your felf, that I may never forfake you, but depend absolutely on your conduct. In You, and by You, I adore, I love, and return all possible Thanks to the most Sacred Trinity, for all Graces and Favours received in this retreat, Amen.

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CHAP. VI.

Another Retreat of Ten Duys, upon the Adorable Person of Jesus Christ.

First Day.

Of the Mystery of the Incarnation.

I Entred into this retreat being greatly defirous to know Jesus Christ; and my first Prayer pals'd in view of the Incarnation; a Mystery to be admir'd by Men and Angels to all Eternity, the source of all our Happiness: A Mystery brighter then the morning Star which ushers in the day to Mortal eyes, by shewing to us the Sun of Grace, to enlighten the darkness of our Hearts, and Cloath us with Immortality and Glory: A Mystery of Mercies, an evidence of the greatness of Gods goodness to us, Christ manifested in our sless, to die for us: A Mystery big with wonders, where God is made Man, and Man becomes God by an Hypostatical union.

o unspeakable Mystery, what Grandeurs and secrets are contain'd in Thee above our understanding? O Mystery that brings Heaven upon Earch, that scatters our darkness, that cures all our evils, that teaches me to know and

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and love God thus debased and annihilated for love of me. O what sweetness do I tast in this consideration! What wonders do I discover of the goodness of God herein beyond all expression ? O happy those who know it by experience!

Hereafter I will not trouble my self, how I may Love God according to his Goodness, or do him Homage according to his Greatness, or Praise and Adore him according to his Excellency, seeing the only begotten Son of the Father was born of a Virgin-Mother, and gave himself to me, to discharge these Infinite obligations for me. O my Jesus, seeing you have wholly given your self to me, that I might by you acquit my Obligations, my care shall be to Love God by your Love, to Obey by your Obedience, and to Adore by your Adorations. Be you my Light, my Strength, and my Conductor to find you, to know you, to be perfectly united to you in this retreat.

In my second Prayer I consider d the great Happiness of the Blessed Virgin, in being chosen from all Eternity to be the Mother of the only begotten Son of God. And I said within my self: Denbtless this is the greatest Favourite of God among all Creatures, enabled with more eminent Graces than any other; for there can be no greater Priviledge or Prerogative Communicated to a meer Creature, then to be the Mother of God. How are your Thoughts, O my God, above the Thoughts of Men? You bring your Designs about in ways most admirable. This most excellent of all Creatures, the greatest Favourite of Heaven, Mother of God, must

be Espoused to a Carpenter, a poor Tradesman, working for his Living: She brings forth her son, the King of Glory, in a Stable, slies into Egypt, lives but poorly, and suffers Infinite shame and dolours, to see her Beloved Jesus Crucisied. Behold the Designs of the Eternal Father about this Blessed Virgin, whom he had

chosen to be the Mother of his only Son.

The weakness of Humane Reason, cannot fathom this. But this is to teach us, to have an efteem for Poverty, Sufferings, and Abjections, feeing God deals thus with his dearest Friends. He is pleas'd to put them in this condition, that they may be able to render him the greatest Love and Service is possible upon Earth. To Love God Supernaturally, is to love him at our own expence, and being content with Sufferings for his fake: A Creature having nothing more to do for God, then to offer to him what he most values, namely, his own Interest and Satisfactions. O my Soul, do not now complain, that thou canst do nothing for God, 'tis enough that thou canst fuffer for him. 'Tis no easie thing to sound the depth of this verity.

In my third Prayer I was much taken up with the Grandeurs of the Sacred Humanity of Jesus, being elevated to the Divinity in the Mystery of the Incarnation, where, by a Personal Union it entred into a state of Purity and Love towards the Divinity in so transcendent a manner, and surpassing the understanding of Men and Angels, that we are sit for nothing but Adoration. O what Grandeurs were communicated to the most Sacred Humanity in the first

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stened montened the meantation? My understanding though enlightned by Faith, sound it
self lost in this Ocean of Wonders, and my Will
was actuated with an esteem and Love of Jesus
beyond all expression. Hence such a Joy possessed my Soul in knowing Jesus, with such content and satisfaction, that all other knowledges
seem'd nothing to it; and with St. Paul, Non
assimavi me scire aliquid nis sesum, I esteem'd
my self to know nothing but sesus, and Him Cru-

cified.

I perceived that an amorous union with Iefus Christ, does elevate a Soul to a wonderful excellency, because it puts us in possession of whole Jesus, his Divinity, his Humanity, his Mysteries, and Verities. For this union is accompanied with a perfect amity, and that makes all things common among Friends. O my fefus although I am of my felf nothing but Weakness and Misery, being a finful Creature; nevertheles I love you with all my heart, and having my part in you, I can supply my wants with your Perfections, as belonging to me; and among my Inabilities present them to the most Sacred Trinity, to acquit my manifold ob-ligations. O how admirable is this union with Jesus Christ! What wonderful benefits does it bring to a Soul, who having nothing of her felf, hath all things in him, and by this means becomes Infinitely rich!

These Thoughts continued yet with me in my fourth Prayer; and I admired Jesus from the first moment of his Birth in his applications towards his Divine Father, to whom he then offer'd

Lib.4. Christian. 240 offer'd himfelf a Sacrifice, to do him Homag : And in his amiable Communications towards us his poor Brethren, little worms of the Earth In these Discoveries I was much troubled that I could not serve him by reason of my Inabilities, and could not please him by reason of my Infidelities.

O that I was so happy as to spend my self in his Service, and die with Love! This is a favour granted but to some special Favourites: And alas! I am a most unwerthy and un-

grateful wretch.

At this time methought I heard our Saviour speaking to me, and giving me a strong impression of his Presence. O what Happiness is it to know Jesus! O what savour is it to find him! What sweet repose finds that Soul, who has a feeling knowledge of Jefus in her? When this Science of Jesus appears in her Interiour, all is sweet and lovely, full of Joy and Peace; and It then seems to her, that heretofore she was wandring in darkness.

In effect it feems to her that the now lives in another World, with other Lights, and other Principles, and other Proceeding, and another tast of Spiritual things. She now seeks occafions to mortifie her Senses; obedience, dependance, contempts, losses do relish with her, and the's pleas'd only to live a Life of Faith, making no matter of the mockeries of Worldly men, who judge not but by Sense, or at best but ac-

ted it the content of his Each in his applications

cording Humane Reason.

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Second Day

Jesus an Infant.

Beginning my Morning Prayer, these words of the Prophet were presented to my Thoughts. Consideravi opera two, & expavi, I have considered your Works, O my Saviour, and stand amazed with admiration. And how could be otherwise affected, to see the Eternal God an Infant? To see that Immensity which the Heavens cannot contain, see Swadled in a Manger? Eternity but one day old? Omnipotency, become weakness? The joy of Angels in a suffering condition? O God of Love, who can but fall into an Extasie, to see these wonders, this excess of Goodness, above the comprehension of Men and Angels? But Blessed Saviour, tis your Glory to have nothing, and do nothing, but what is altogether incomprehensible.

Larth, where the whole Creation seem'd to be struck dumb with admiration of the great My-steries then brought to pass. I beheld how the Vingin Mary and good faseb fixing their Eyes on the Infant, God-man, lying in a Manger, spake not one Word, being transported with Love and Admiration, and wholly astonish'd ar an Humiliation so Prodigious; and I wonder'd all Creatures did not stand immoveable for a whole Age, at the sight of so incomprehensible

a Mystery. All Expressions are below this excess of Love and Condescention: Let us, Omy Soul, be silent with a respectful attention, loveling, adoring, admiring these great things God has done for us. Methinks I have a desire to stand always in silence at the sees of Infant jesus.

Tapply d my left in my fecond Prayer to consider the universal denidation of all things that feem'd most accessary at his coming into the World. To be born as an Extle out of his Mothers House; to have no lodging usual for men, but a Stable, which is prepared for Beasts, to be his Bed-chamber, and a Manger for his Cradle, to fusie the rigours of Winter for want of Fire; what poor interable Creature could be reduced to a greater depudation?

Notwithstanding this is that which ravish'd both Heaven and Easth, and the Glorious Angels sound nothing in Heaven of equal admiration; and therefore hither they came to contemplate these wanders, and to bring the glad tidings thereof to shen, making the Air to eccho with their joyful Melody, and without any mention of the Divinity, declare only to them, that they shall find an Infant wrapt in swading Cloaths, lying in a Manger: And hither the Shepheres can transported with Joy, and the World has followed them:

When the Wile men demanded of Herod, Where he was born who was King of the Jews, This Idea of Royalty did much afright him, and in rage he defigned a Ciuclty more Barbarous than what as yet the Sun did ever behold. Tis a

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great Truth, that Grandeur and an elevated condition (though in the Perion of God him-felf made man,) is attended with many evils and commotions; but abjection and Humiliations in the Infant Jesus has force enough to win our hearts. And yet we will not underfiand this.

In my third Prayer I discover'd, that fince the Mystery of the Incarnation, which is the wonderful union of the Creator with the Creature, then Sons of men are called to a higher degree of Prayer and Converse with God then formerly. The gift of sublime Prayer is one effect of this Divine Mystery, and we ought to value and preserve it as a Treasure. The heart of Jesus is the center of men; and when a poor Soul is distracted, she must gently lead her felf to the heart of Jesus, to offer to the Eternal Father the holy dispositions of that adorable heart to unite that little we do with that Insinite service Jesus renders to his Eternal Father. Thus our little will be made great by Jesus Christ.

O my Boul, let this Divine heart of Jesus for the suture be thy Oratory. This in him and by him thou must offer all thy Prayers to God, to make them receptable to the Divine Majesty. Make this thy School, to Jearn there the supercomment knowledge of the Love of God, which is quite contrary to that of the World. Thou will find there Principles sublime and pure; a Treasure which will enrich thee with Purity, Love and Fidelity; and what is very pleatiful in this Treasury, Humiliations, Poverty, and Sufferinge. The love and effects of

The Interiour 244

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thefe things is a precious Jewel, which principally and originally is found in the heart of lefus. Other hearts, how noble foever have more or less of it, according to the measure they receive from this exhaustible Treasury.

In my fourth Prayer I had a ftrong Idea of the dispositions, which the Blessed Virgin and St. Fofeph had towards the Infant Jefus. Twas revealed to a Holy Soul, that the Bleffed Virgin passed all the time in Prayer, while her Sacred Womb was the Tabernacle of the Son of God, and never ceas'd to adore the Word made Flesh That St. Foleph entring with the Holy Virgin into the Stable at Beshlehers, was elevated in high contemplation upon the Mysteries there to be Accomplished, and in this Prayer was fo replenished with the Holy Spirit, that his defires for the coming of the Mellias, were more pure and more ardent, then, of all the Holy Patriarchs before: And that next to the Holy Virgin he was enlightned with the wonders of the Myfiery of the Incarnation, standed live !!

At the moment of the wonderful Nativity of the Infant Jefus, fush Rayes of Glory and admirable Splendors were darted from his Soul as pierced the Spirit of the Bleffed Virgin and St. Toleph, and discovered to them the infinite Grandeurs of that Babe, through all the weaknesseatheir eyes were witness of. And in deep silence and contempletion, they offer'd to him a pure and amorous offering of their whole Being as to their God. O who can comprehend the wonderful effects, that his presence caus'd in their Hearts? These considerations did fweet-

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Internal Prayer, in Silence and Solitude with Infant-Jefus,

Third Day.

Fesus Poor and Abject.

N my Morning Prayer I found in my felf a great efteem and love for Poverty, feeing Jefus had fo efteem'd and lov'dir, and we have an obligation to be conform to him. And I faid within my felf: O Poverty of Spirit, what riches doft thou bring to a Soul? Thou giveft her possession of a Kingdom of Peace: Thou dost purifie her, to unite her to Jesus in his Humiliations, which gives her a right to the riches of Glory; for Truth hath faid it, Bleffed are the Poor in Spirit, for theirs is the Kingdom of Heaven

Ohow a Soul, which once hath beheld the Beauties of Holy Poverty, is ready to follow Jesus poor and abject, and conform her self to his example? She finds her felf freed of her Fetters, which keep men Captives and Slaves to the World; and it seems to her to be depriv'd of all Creatures, is the greatest Treasure upon Earth. She growes rich by her loffes, and when God will have her to possess Goods and Honours, 'tis yet with a disposition to quit them, and policis God alone. She therefore only keeps them R 2

them by a pure dependance on the Divine Will, without an effect or love for them, but loves in them folely the Will of God. These were the impressions my first Prayer made in me.

In my fecond Prayer I continued to confider the poor and abject states of Jesus Christ. God in his Eternal Decrees had a love for the humane ways of the Word Incarnate. Those Souls, who are favour'd with Illustrations from Heaven, are frongly carried the same way, discerning clearly that they can do nothing better upon Earth than to cread the footsteps of God himself. To this end the Divine Wisdom elevates them above themselves and their natutal inclinations, to conduct them folely by the instincts of Grace; whereby they make a plorious conquest over the weakness of Nature, Self-love, and Garnal Prudence, which stand in the way to Christian Persection, and hinder us from following Jefus in his Abjections.

It highly concerns us to die daily to the World, that we may attain to the Purity of Divine Love, that is, Posses and Love God alone: The Pride of Adam will not die in us, unless we be content to follow Jesus in his Abjections. O my Soul, let us fall in Love with this state of Jesus Christ, which is little known to the World, and take it for a Soveraign fallow from Heaven, to become so contemptible for Gods sake, as to pass for one hardly good for any thing. O Jesus, how sew Companions have you of your extreme Poverty? Many Holmour this Virtue in you, but sew practice it, they must be Faithful Friends indeed who follows.

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low you in these ways, so bitter and distantful
to Flesh and Blood. O Jesus, be Merciful into me, and grant me this Fidelity, that I may
never for take you in Life, nor Death.

My third Prayer was taken up with a general view of the Humiliations of the Son of God, for which I felt my Soul had much Love and Respect. These Divine Humiliations did ravish me beyond comparison, and I discovered such wonderful Beauty in them, that I could not be satisfied with beholding them. I was deeply possess a with a defire to conform my self to Jesus in his Humiliations, and to spend my days in his imitation; and I was much troubled, I could not yet quit all things, to live a poor, abject, retird life. This no less the work of Grace, to bring us to relish the Abjections of Jesus Christ, as to be taken with his Grandeurs: His Grandeurs are incomprehensible; but nothing in my eyes seem more great and rich, and precious than his Humiliations.

The unspeakable Love that Jesus Christ has for Souls, does manisest it self by making them partakers of his Humiliations. Be content, O my Soul, with what part he shall give thee: For it seems to me a punishment, to abound with Riches and Honours, whereby we become unlike to Jesus, and march on in ways contrary to his practice and example. When I restect upon my sins, I cannot sufficiently admire the great Graces God is pleas d to vouchsafe me. A strong argument to convince of his Insinite goodness, and affords much matter of Humiliation, considering how unworthy I am of the

8 The Interiour

least favours. But for me a poor wretch, to have a cast to folitude, to converse only with God and his Holy Angels, what a Mercy is this?

It came into my mind that Meles, who had been a Captain of Thieves, was afterwards a Holy Hermit; and I had a special Devotion to him, desiring him to help me by his Prayers. O the wonderful effects of Grace, that a Robber should become a Hermit! I have a Devotion to Saints that have been great sinners, methinks they are Powerful with God, to help sinners to be converted.

This view of the extreme humiliations of Jesus yet continuing, was the subject of my fourth Prayer: And I found in my self great desires to begin a new kind of life, to give my self absolutely to God as a Sacrifice, by dying to all things of the world by a vow of Poverty. But I being not yet in a condition to forsake my temporal affairs, I resolv'd to make such a Vow when all things were settled; and I took care that my affairs might be so regulated, as to put me in a condition to comply with the call of God.

Having taken this resolution, I found my heart inflamed with desires to be wholly for God; and to conform my self as much as possible to Jesus in his humiliations. Nature felt some afflicting resentment hereat, and fornish'd me with arguments to divert me from it: But the light of Grace scatter'd these thoughts, and taught me to neglect the help of Greatures, by casting my self wholly into the arms of his Providence. O my Jesus! the only love of my Soul, though the most despited of men, your Divine attracts

Lib. 4. Christian. 249 and inspirations do so powerfully invite me to sollow you in your ways of poverty, that I shall never soon enough see the happy moment to engage my self thereto, by a Vow never to be recalled.

Fourth Day.

Jesus, the Fountain of Grace and Piety.

N my first Prayer God gave me to see the infinite grandeurs of the Sacred Humanity united to the Divinity in the same person. This ineffable union was the general and amorous object of my regard, which wrought in my Soul a very great efteem, and fingular love and union with Jefus Chrift. This state of Jefus rejoyced my heart, and I dwelt upon it, my Soul being facisfied with wonderful contentment. I had interiour affurances, and very great certitudes of the Divinity of Jefus, nothing in him feemed dark unto me, though all furpaffed the firength of reason. I beheld him as the Principal of Grace and Glory. This manifestation was in me by a Divine light, and I found it filled my heart with most pleasing impressions.

The small conviction we have of the Divinity of Jesus, makes us such cold Christians, and that we walk so slowly in the ways of Grace. For who sirmly believes that Jesus is God, will have a singular esteem of his Doctrine, of his Counsels, of his Proceedings, and think it his

Glory

Glory for to follow him. The perfect belief of the Divinity of Jesus, carries a Soul to real endeavours after perfection, to despise the world, to take up the Cross, and follow Jesus in his abjections. This is to be the Image of Jesus Christ. The poorer we are in Spirit, the richer we are in Grace; the more a Soul is nothing in her self, the more God is all in her, and is pleased to work great things for her.

Jesus presented himself to my spirit in my second Prayer, discovering to me in general the different states of his life; passive in his Sufferings, active in Virtues, and how he is the Origen and Source of all purity, to which we aspire by

a spiritual-life.

I conceiv'd, first, That there's a purity of suffering, which is great indeed, when we suffer without seeking relief; carrying this Cross for

God's fake as long as he plosfes.

There is a purity of action, when we act not (whether interiourly or exteriourly) but by the motion of God's spirit, with pure intentions. Here arguments of humane reason are cut off, and we stir not without some impressions of Grace, working only for God by his working in us. We must labour hard, and be perfectly idead to the world, before we can come to this state of purity.

There's a punity of intention, when we have lonly an eye to the will of God, to do what pleafes him without acting upon other Motives, brough good and landable, wherein seems to be sinuscraft; as fearer offend; to be faithful to God's call, to be more loved and remarked.

A Soul in this flate has no regard to herfelf, but folely to the will of God, her End and Obiect.

There's a purity of imployment, when a Soul will not divert her thoughts from God, but by Order from God himself, by some motion of his holy Spirit. Hence we shun unnecessary visits, unprofitable words, superfluous occupations; and that is superfluous to one Soul, which is not to another, by reason of the different degrees of Grace imparted to them. We must suffer many mortifications to attain this purity; and such a Soul must fear nothing more than Insidelity. This is but a branch of the purity of action.

There's a purity of Virtue, when we practice only what God will have us to do. There's a purity of spiritual delight, when the superiour part of the Soul receives no consolations willingly from any Creature, or sensual things, but stands upon her guard to keep them out. And there's a purity of Prayer, when the Soul(elevated above her self by the workings of God in her) is in extasse of spirit, and united to God alone by contemplation.

A Soul that once has had a feeling of God in her, fees an infinite difference between Him and the holiest Creatures; and entring into a great interiour solitude, converses with God alone. All these sorts of purity appeared to me in the

Interiour of Jesus, as in their Source,

In my third Prayer I came to know that the mysteries or states of Jesus Christ are not only the exemplar, but also the efficient of our states.

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so that we suffer, not only to imitate Jesus in his sufferings, but because Jesus by his sufferings imprints on us the virtue of his spirit to give us the grace to suffer for him. When we pray, 'tis not only to imitate Jesus in contemplation, but because he insufes into our hearts the gift of Prayer by his holy Spirit. And if a Soul arrive to that heighth, as to possess Jesus Christ in an extraordinary manner, he then does all in her, and for her, she being only pliable to his Divine Operations. We cannot continue in this state without wonderful purity; the least sally of immortisted Nature will much endamage it.

How often has God been pleas'd to give me experience of this, when Jesus uniting himself unto me in the holy Communion; annihilates all my thoughts, words and affections, to become to me all things in me! He is my Thankfulness, my Offering, my Humility, my Charlty, my Prayers; and I do nothing, but remain united to him, who works all for my Soul, as it were, annihilated in his presence. Words as well as thoughts fail us in the presence of the WORD, who pleads to his Fathers for those Souls he possesses in such a my sterious manner. What marvels are there hidden beyond

expression?

In my fourth Prayer I confider'd, that being a Christian, I had a strict obligation to follow Christ but besides that general tie, I had a special vocation to imitate Jesus in his humiliations. To follow him in this way with purity, I thust forsake all grandeur, and be content with povertry and abjection, and labour stoutly for

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a perfect abnegation of my self. Since God

has given me a generous resolution, to sacrifice my self wholly to his service, I will follow his call, though I die for t. Methinks I am enabl'd to do it with great peace and liberty of Spirit. What evil can happen to me, if I die for God,

who died for Me?

Those who choose to be poor, out of defire to follow Jesus, are peculiar Objects of God's care and providence, which extends it felf to all men, but especially to those who are the lively Images of his Son. He is their Father in a peculiar manner, and fets a watch about them more than others. For is it possible he should not give Bread to them, who leave all their Temporals, to ferve him better, and love him purer ? Let us fife all humane reasonings on this subject; let us go whither Grace calls us, and fear nothing: If we die in the service, 'twill be happy for us. Tisa great favour from God, when we breath out our Souls in the flames of Divine Love. their a their restricts they are their are many

mollis and read party and read the Pallion.

Jesus, Zelator of Souls.

IN my first Prayer I apply'd my self to Jesus, as Zelater of Souls, for whom he gave his most precious Blood. I beheld, what I could not comprehend, that this Zeal of Jesus for the good of Souls was infinite. It seemed to me, that

The Interiour Lib. 4. that my Soul receiv'd fome small portion of this holy Zeal, and I was powerfully inclin'd to lay out my felf for my Neighbours good, of. fering my felf to God, to do and fuffer what he pleased. wanted bas

But I perceiv'd this Zeal for Souls must be infused into us; we must not run before we be fent, otherwise we hall neither do good for others, nor our felves, but diffurb our lateriour. and commit many diforders. When this Zeal is kindled in our Souls by the breathing of God's holy Spirit, it puts nothing out of order, but we go in Perfection, and advance in Prayer. However, all must be regulated by Prudence, left become run our call; and burt our selves, while ine would do good to others. . starout will rish

on For our cardinust be to procure the good of others, according to the grace conferred upon w. | Some in an affive life, by Breaching and daffructing t formelby works of corporal Chariey tothersby afficing up to God their contemplative life, Ichein Solitudes, Acheir Austerities, their Sufferings, their Prayers. There are many ways to be instrumental for the good of others. Let every one imploy his proper talent.

Our bleffed Saviour being near his Paffion, left us as a Logacy this divine Commandment, Love ye one another, as I have loved you, which was the subject of my second Prayer. I then found, that when a Soul has made a good or-brance into the heart of Jelus Christ, and by me Highe of Prayer fees the infinite love of God toswards meta Grace then difeovers how this disine charity is free, generous, and magnificent. ther

Free, having a love for us when objects of his just displeasure. Generous, surmounting all difficulties, and conquering all resistances. Magnificent, in giving his own life for our Redemption. This is a Zeal truly Divine for the Salvation of Souls.

Now his pleasure is that the charity we have for our Neighbour be regulated by this divine Model, that we love them to do the will of God, and obey his Commands. That we love them generously, without any regard to natural aversions, or injuries they have done us, or any temporal advantages we may receive from them; but after the example of Josus, to love and do good even to our greatest enemies. On how many great Saints, considering the ardent love of Christ to us, have burn'd with the slames of a holy Zeal, and spent themselves in labours, to do good to those Souls for whom Christ died! But (alas!) we slave little zeal for God, for our Neighbours, or our selves.

My third Prayer passed in considerations of the prodigious goodness of Jesus to men, who seem'd to forget himself, and depose the grandents of his Majesty, to debase himself in the search of our Souls; to indulge and love them with as much affection, as if they did contribute to his selicity. He prevents them with wonderful mercies, and though they be unworthy of his love, he gives them sensible feelings thereof, by speaking to the heart in this, or such like mannet: My Sister, my Speake, my soule, my love takes a delight in thee; knowest them well who I am? Tis I that must by God, thy Creator,

The Interiour Lib.4.

thy Savieur: Is I, who came from the bosom of my Father into this world, to find thee, being lost, and tell thee how I love thee, and I demand nothing but love again.

My Soul thus prevented with the bleffings of this sweetness, and powerfully touched with a fense thereof, wanted words to express my thank ulnefs : However, I faid, Omy God! You are my love; I love you, and will love you eternally. wish all my heart; for what elfe have I to return. but love for love? Tis a wonderful love for you to debase the grandeurs of your Divinity, to search after poor finful Souls: Nor is it less wonderful for you to draw thefe Souls out of themfelves, to fees them from their miseries, and advance them to your embraces, and place them in your heart m lowe tich Treasures This is the wonderful excels of the leve of John Zelster of Souls. This love that for humbled Jesus, does elevate a Soul to these amorous exercises, and makes her see her own unworthines, and the incomparable beauty ofher well-beloved; balled 19754

of Jesus humbled, and doing Penance for us. I beheld him as it were annihilated in the presence of his eternal Pather, to honour his eternal Beeing, by facrificing his humanicy, which he continued his whole life, and confummated on the Groß. I beheld also, how being charged with our fines he did continual Penance for us, to satisfie the divine Justice, and give content to that infinite love he has for our Souls.

has loved us, and imitate his sufferings by a spirit

Christian.

Lib. 4. of penance and annihilation. I am a great finner, and therefore ought to entertain a spirit of penance, and thereby make advantage of all evils and infirmities which happen to me. My principal affair in this world ought to be to annihilate my felf, and to fuffer; to annihilate my felf, to pay homage to the infinite grandeurs of God; and to fuffer; as a just punishment of my fins.

After Confession, having but one Gloria Patri for my penance, it came into my thoughts, that no penance is little when 'tis united to the fufferings of Jesus Christ, who by them has done penance for our fins. It feemed to me, that one only Ave Maria, united to the fufferings of the Son of God, which are of infinite merit, and did infinitely satisfie his eternal Father, becomes a penance which wonderfully fatisfies for our fine My Soul was comforted with this truth, and L had no more to do, than to unite my little Grofles to the Cross of Jesus.

Sixth Day.

Jesus, contemplating and enjoying.

Ur bleffed Saviour did fill my Soul with fuch fuper-abundant confolation in my morning Prayer, that I feem'd to have some part of that state of enjoyment which is reserv'd for the Saints in Glory. O amorque enjoyment! how wonderfully dost thou purifie our Souls! Thou

Thou takelt our hearts off from the World, thou doll Crucifie us with a delightful Martyrdom, thou doll enlighten, thou doll purifie, thou doll inflame, thou doll mortifie, thou doll fortifie, thou makelt us live and die together.

A fmall taft of this Ocean of delights will inebriate the Souls of men, and the Angels in Glory. This is that Bleffed Life which is granted to some Servants of God, honouring him by continual enjoyments, which he pours into their Souls. Tis a great fecret of the Interiour Life, to be paffive to the operations of God in us, whether he vifits us with dolorous and crucifying, or joyful and bearifying impressions. Our fidelity confifts in a pure correspondence to his defigns without reluctance. If he please to make our Soul a Garden of Delights, embrace his Favours. All the ways of God are good in themselves, but that which he puts us in, is ber forus. O how the state of Jesus suffering, is adorable! O how his state of enjoying is admirable! We must apply our selves to one or other, according to the defigns of the Divine Wildom

I found an Image of Jesus in Contemplation, his Look and Posture ravish'd me, and this took up my second Prayer. I was not satisfied with beholding his Divine Aspect, I admir'd and ador'd him. Considering the prosound attention he had to the Grandeurs of his Eternal Father, and how he was absorp'd in the Divinity, I made it my work to contemplate also by him, and in him, uniting my self to the utmost of my Power to his Divine entertainments. O Jesus

contemplating! Jesus taken up with your Father, with whom you pass in Prayer whole nights made as bright as the days of Eternity! Jesus living a retir d life in the Divine Essence! You are the object of my Love, I see nothing

so beautiful as you are in this flate.

My Soul hath no greater delight upon Earth, than to have an eye to Jesus, to think of him, to speak of him, to figh after him. O how happy is that Soul, which Jesus makes his Manfion? I know not how Jefus comes into a Soul, but he's there sometimes sooner then perceiv'd, filling her with Bleffings, and making her to find, that he is her repose and true Felicity. Alas! when shall it be that Jesus possesses my Soul, so as never to leave me? This is what I figh after, and I will purchase it at any rate. So to possess Jesus is a Heaven upon earth, and all we have is too little to gain it. Come, O dear Jesus, and make my Heart your Manfion for ever: Of all your Graces and Favours, I only defire you to be always present with me, and that I make it my business so to serve you, as in some fort to be made partaker of these admirable disposition of your contemplative Life.

I then had a fight of the Infinite difference between the service of Jesus, between the Sensual, and a Spiritual Life. This cannot be discerned; unless Jesus imprint his Maxims, his Spirit and Sentiments in our hearts, which will enable us to Crucifie our Sensuality, and obey

his motions.

I observ'd that my Devotion to the Sacred Humanity increas'd daily, and felt in my Soul

fuch Powerful attracts, that no fooner was lin a Praying posture, but Jesus posses'd my heart. and discover'd something of his Grandeurs to me. This Grace I received from his goodness in my shird Prayer. I After which methought I knew Jefus Christ in a new manner; who though inaccessable to the Creature, by reason of his Divine and Infinite Perfections, yet lometimes he does most clearly manifest himself to special Favourites. Such a view of Jesus is more to be valued than the whole World; and a Soul that once has been vouchfased this Grace, esteems her self so rich, that she looks upon all Worldly things as drofs and dung, adhering close to Jesus as her only Treasure. We can never know what admirable effects this fight of Jesus works in a Soul, but by experience.

Tis true, there's a great deal of difference between the Visions of Jesus. A soul in the beginning of a Spiritual Life is taken up with the sensible part of the Sacred Humanity, but in the progress she receives such pure discoveries of Jesus, that she only relishes Jesus wholly Divinized, but cannot express what she sees in him. Souls thus disposed, receive much of the Spirit of Jesus Christ; and his humane states feem to them so elevated and transcendent, that they find nothing more beautiful, more precious, or more charming to win their Affections. O that we did know Jesus as he ought to be known! O that we could see the inestimable riches, the rare and precious Treasures con-

tained in him!

lited you is elected by the

My fourth Prayer was only to open the eyes of my Soul, to fee Jesus Christ, as we behold any Object with the eyes of our Body, to confider it attentively. He was pleas'd so to manifest himself to my Soul, as my joy was superabundant, and I was dead to all things, and my self, to live in Jesus, and love his Beauties. I found my self in a manner like a drunken man; who is not himself, but as a dead man; he knows not what he says, nor is capable of any business, nor can govern himself; his drunkenness has possess d him, and made him sit for nothing esse.

Enjoyment, for the time it continues, has the like effects in a Soul, she is then capable of nothing but this enjoyment, which is all in all unto her. Such Souls are now and then put upon the rack by themselves or their directors, fearing least this may savour of idleness. They think it may be better to suffer, and more profitable to help their Neighbour, and that self-love may creep into this enjoyment: This sometimes brings a Soul to quit this enjoyment, so as to put her self out of the way where God has placed her, except some particular Grace preserve her in the performance of Gods will.

A Soul capable of this Grace must be in a state of great Purity, disengaged and dead to all things Exteriour and Interiour, indifferent to all Divine Ordinations whatever, and be in a perfect disposition to adhere to God, and his Divine operations in what manner he pleases. O how great is our humane weakness! O how often do we resist the Designs of God by our Impersections?

S 3

Seventh

Seventh Day.

Jesus our Exemplar and Guide.

N my first Prayer I consider'd how Jesus was a scandal to the Jews, and to the Gentiles foolishnes; that the same Person should be God and Man, and die upon a Cross to save the World, the belief of this feem'd a pure extravagancy to poor, blinded Creatures. I confider'd also how a true Supernatural Christian Life seems but as folly to Worldly-wise-men, who cannot understand it, being elevated above fense and humane reason, wholly Spiritual and repugnant to the Inclinations of depriv'd nature. Alas! how the practice of the true Chriftian Life is rare? To love croffes, and contempts, and poverty, and humiliations, and to rejoyce in Persecutions, by preferring the Maxims of Faith before humane Wisdom, is a proceeding very extraordinary to Carnal men, who in a manner are wholly guided by their Senses. If Grace do not open the eyes of Faith in us, our poor Soul has no director but Reason which casts a mist before us, to hinder our sight from Chri-Rian Verities, at automobil bear thought

The same Grace also discover'd to me, that as Jesus lived a Suffering Life, we likewise should conform to his states, and be content with crosses and contrarieties, pains and deprivations, and be pleas'd with whatsoever comes

from

from the hand of God: The poor, retir'd, abject Life I refolv'd to lead, answerable to my Vocation, without doubt will be accounted a folly by Worldly men, and may sometimes so seem to my self. But take courage, O my Soul, a lively Faith will discover the deceit by a Light from Heaven. The Proceedings of a Spiritual Life are not govern'd by Humane Arguments, but Divine and Supereminent Motives: For we must suffer, to do Penance, and we must love Poverty, to advance pure Love, which despites all things to have God in possession.

In my fecond Prayer 1 clearly faw, that Jefus took no pleafure without necessity, to preferibe fuch rough Maxims to us. He knew that
the corruption of our Nature was great, our inclination to things of this World was continual,
and therefore to live in his Love, requir'd constant Mortifications and Contradictions to Nature. And the degree of Love is according to
the degree of Self-denyal and Mortification.
Jesus hath founded Christian Perfection upon
two high Mountains, Calvary and Tabor; on
the one we learn Perfection and Mortification,
on the other the Perfection of Prayer; and on

both the Sublimity of Divine Love.

To follow Jesus Christ upon one or th'other mountain, we must die to the World, and never let the love of the Cross and Mortification to languish in us. Solitude must be dear to such Souls, and they must take no imploy but what God will have them; least interessing themselves, and spending their Spirits in other matters, they make themselves unable to solow

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low vigorously the works of their Vocation. My Soul, would it not be a sad thing to quit thy Creator and Redeemer? to lay out thy self upon the Creature, and not correspond to his Inspirations, who calls thee to himself? What a horrible Insidelity would this be? Let us not grieve the Holy Spirit, by whom we are Sealed

to the day of Redemption.

The subject of my third Prayer was the admirable Occonomy of the Incarnation, in that by the excess of Love and Goodness, God was made Man, and Man became God. profound veneration for the adorable Humanily absorpt in the Divinity, and with an amorous confidence beheld the Divinity as it were annihilated in the Humanity, which feem'd to me as a Tabernacle of Honour, where God dwelt with Infinite Delight: This Humanity allo in a manner diviniz'd, takes Infinite Delight in the Divinity; from whence it receives wonderful Impressions of Annihilation, to be poor, abject and despis'd, Crucified. For after God was made man, he inspir'd the Humanity with ardent defires and love of Sufferings for us Men and our Salvation.

O Jesus, when you communicate your self to a Soul, she receives impressions from you, which incline her to a love of Contempts and Sufferings. And when a Soul seels in her self the greatest propension to Sufferings and Self-denyal, tis then she most participates of your communications, and has the greatest assurance of them. For O good Jesus, your Spirit is sull of such impressions from the Divinity, and the

Soul

Soul where you reign as King, does Infallibly receive the like impressions from your presence.

In my fourth Prayer I was touch'd with a great defire to leave this Mortal Life, so sull of Sin and Misery, and deprived of the Beatifical Vision of God my Saviour. Oh how irksom is it, not to be in a capacity to contemplate at leasure this Infinite Beauty, this Essence sull of Infinite Persections, this only true Object of the Loves of Heaven and Earth? O when shall I be deliver'd from this Prison of Flesh, that I may behold Jesus the Light of my Eyes, and Joy of my Heart? Must I yet continue longer in this banishment? What a cross is it to live here? What a punishment is the delay? Death, how welcom wilt thou be in my embraces?

We must languish with Love after the Infinite Beauty of Jesus Christ, and sigh to enjoy him. O my Soul, do not amuse thy self with Creatures, love the Cross, which is the highway to Happiness. Is it possible to believe in Jesus Christ, and Love him, and to languish with Defires to enjoy Him? To ftand much in fear of Death, is a fign we have little defire to see the Infinite Beauties of God, seeing Death only opens the gate of Paradice. O Death, thou art defirable, come, and put me in pofsession of the Object of my Love, that I may live with Jesus who is the source of Life, and the joy of the Blessed. In the interim, O my Soul, let us have neither Love nor Life, nor operation, but what is in him, and for him, our Soveraign Happiness. Vivit in me Christus.

Eighth Day.

Jesus our Light.

The Light of the World, which discover'd to me such a Beauty in the Mysteries of our Religion, with rayes of a new Light, that I saw more then ever the vanity of the World, and the strange Sottishness of such men, who preferr'd the Darkness of Falsehood before the

Light of Truth. Infanias fallas.

The beams of this Light works wonders in a Soul, for it leaves such impressions as bring her to know Truth in another manner then by the sole Light of Reason or Faith either. If we be in the Closet of some great King in the dark, we know well there be excellent pieces there; we may know their number, bigness, and value of the Precious Stones, the rareness of the Painting, and what else we see not: But when once the least light of day appears, then we begin to have a view of all their Riches, Beauties, and Excellencies, and the whole order of the Closet salutes our eyes, and in admiration thereof, we are taken with it in an extraordinary manner.

When it pleases God to give us a fight of his Divine Beauties, discovering them to a Soul by the least Ray of his Heavenly Light, then the Soul is wonderfully affected, and being more

then

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then ever transported with admiration, looks upon all things of the World as nothing. Faith indeed gives us a certain affurance of her Objects, but leaves in obscurity: But one sole Ray from the Eyes of Jesus, when he is pleas'd to dart it into a Soul, doth confirm, fortifie, encourage, and refresh her with Illustrations extraordinary, and Soveraign consolations. Accedite ad eum, & illuminamini, We cannot appeared to the solution of the solut

proach to fesus, and not be enlightned.

I came to know in my second Prayer, that when Jesus is pleas'd to manifest himself to a Soul, he insuses a Light into her, which gives her a marvellous Facility to believe the Verities of the Word Incarnate. She has a certainty, and as it were experience, that his Thoughts, his Words, his Actions, his Proceedings, his Doctrine, his Sufferings were Divine, and brought a Soveraign Honour to the Divinity. O Science of Jesus, how art thou sweet and admirable? All other knowledge in respect of thee is but ignorance and vanity.

I have by the great goodness of God had some little experience to know Jesus in this manner, but I cannot express it. The more this knowledge increases, the less is it explicable. The profound attention to Jesus does so take up my Spirit, that it takes away my Speech: It calls me from all Creatures, to converse with him alone, and draws me out of my self, to

be ravish'd with him.

O World! how blind art thou, not to see the Beauty of the Poor and abject states of Jesus! His Doctrine and his Maxims are the only true Light:

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Light: All that thou haft, O ignorant World, feduced by the Prince of Darkness, is but meer Darkness, thy opinions, thy imployments, thy hopes, thy fears, thy defires, thy entertainments are but Darkness and disorder; thou fumblest almost at every step, because thou walkest in Darkness, out of which thou canst neverget but by Jesus Christ For as the Sun is the principle of Corporal Light to the World; fo Christ the San of Righteousness is the source of all Spiritual Light, and whom his Grace and Doctrine do not enlighten, they wander in Darknets. Ego fum Lux mundi, qui sequitur me, non ambulat in tenebris.

My third Prayer pass'd in continual astonishment, in that I had fo little known Jesus Christ; and of that extreme blindness wherein I had liv'd. At present I had almost a continual sight, and a fweet and forceable inclination to regard this admirable Object: fo that I thought every moment loft, which was not fo imployed. To behold him with amorous affections is a Cure for all my evils. For when my Soul is afflicted with fears of loofing Gods favour, or with experience of her Miseries, or with difficulties about Perfection, one gracious look from Jesus does easily scatter these clouds, appeale this storm, and brings a calm and serenity to my Soul.

Methinks I see clearly, that diffidence in our selves, and considence in Jesus, to keep our selves at his feet in Prayer, or any other manner near him, as Grace hall fuggest,) is an exceltent means to Pray well, and to receive from : 117

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we must well observe, that what Light and motions we have from Grace, do more unite us to God by proficiency in Virtue; but Natural Lights and Sentiments do not produce the like effect. For example, I may fee my frailty and weakness by knowledge acquired by experience of the Miferies of this Life. I may know the fame also by the Light of Grace. Grace with knowledge gives me also strength and courage to humble my felf, to confess my frailty, to have recourse to God for his affistance. A natural light has not the like effect, but leaves a man in his pride and miseries; or what is worse,

in fadness and disconsolations.

Our bleffed Saviour in my fourth Prayer gave me a fight and sentiment of his adorable Perfon above all expression. The eyes of my Soul being fix'd to behold the Beauty, the Goodness, the Grandeurs and Perfections of that admirable Compositum, my Will could not be satisfied with those pleasures and contentments she then received. O what great happiness does an enlarged Soul receive, when the Veil is a little drawn from these Divine Mysteries! Methinks I could have stood beholding this Divine Object all the days of my life. I consider'd chiefly, that the holy Soul of Jesus was enlightened with the Divinity, to know what measures he ought to take during his mortal life, to fulfil the Decrees of his eternal Father; his wonderful Wisdom in choofing an humble, poor, and suffering life, to instruct us Men, and give Us Example; and that

280 The Interiour Lib. 4. that worldly Wisdom is but meer Folly, false and pernicious to her followers.

In this view of Jesus, every thing in him seemed to me charming and admirable; not the least glance from his eye, or word from his mouth, or sigh or tear from him, but at present, was to me an object of infinite delight, and seemed to me sufficient to take up a Soul for ever with contemplation. But the contemplation of God must be accompanied with imitation, and by the conduct of his Grace we must enter into his states, poor, abject, and suffering; it is in vain to think to attain to perfection any other way. The only imitation and conformity to Jesus, makes the Soul capable of pure contemplation, and contemplation will preserve her in this conformity.

Ninth Day.

Jesus, Suffering and Dying.

Thorns, clad with a Purple Robe in derision, buffeted, mock'd, spit upon, and scourg'd, was the object and subject of my morning Prayer. I took great gust, though full of compassion, to see him in this posture, because he himself was never more satisfied, in that he could never better satisfie his Father. And presently I said, O my sesses you were never thus array a before now; all the Glory of Mount Tabor did not cloath

ther takes infinite complacency to behold you in this state; for you are a Holocaust, all surrounded with dolours and deaths, with contempts and

annibilations.

In this entertainment I communicated, and receiv'd my Jesus in this state, who spoke in this manner to my Soul; I come to thee, to make thee like my self: Thom wilt be never wholly acceptable to me, or my Divine Father, till thom become like me. I then found in my self a great desire to be so, and that I might take contentedly all disgraces and losses that any accidents brought upon me, as so many advantages to make me like to my Saviour. Ecce homo! I then remain'd much comforted and fortified, and

very devout to Jesus in this state.

In my second Prayer I found my Soul attracts ed with a wonderful gust, to behold Jesus crucified, a spectacle pleasing to the eternal Father, the comfort of Heaven, and the terror of Hell. I discover'd a certain way of beauty, which cloathed the horrors of Calvary with wonderful comliness. O my God! (said I) what pleasure is it to see the God of Beauty die for man upon a Cros! This beauty is not in his visage, now all disfigured; but in the goodness of God, which is here all in splendours, and in the tryumphs of an incomparable love, which sacrificed his most precious life for our Redemption. The eternal Father was much delighted with this Beauty.

The Bruises, and Wounds, and Blood upon his facred Head and Face, did not make him dissigur'd in my eyes, because the beauty of Divine Justice,

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Christian. Lib. 4. you with such Beauties; doubtless the eternal Father takes infinite complacency to behold you in this state; for you are a Holocaust, all surroun-ded with dolours and deaths, with contempts and annihilations. In this entertainment I communicated, and receiv'd my Jesus in this state, who spoke in this manner to my Soul; I come to thee, to make like my felf: Thon wilt be never wholly ac-4-r. till those elf a great ontentedly accidents antages to no! I then tified, and oul attract Tefus crunal Father. ror of Hell. uty, which

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The Bruises, and Wounds, and Blood upon his facred Head and Face, did not make him dissigur'd in my eyes, because the beauty of Divine Justice,

Justice, which was thereby infinitely glorisied, gave him a grace which is unspeakable. Special of us forms pre filis bominum. In this state Jesus appeared to me the most beautiful of men. And my heart was so taken with Jesus crucified, that I could not but love him in the state of his annihilations.

The. Grace which this view left in my Soul, was a particular effeeth and love for fufferings. I faw nothing more beautiful, feeing they were a kind of Ornament to God himfelf, and rendred him an object of fingular complacency to his eternal Father. Jesus hath sanctified the states of poverty, contempt, and fufferings, through which he passed, to make them sources of grace to fuch Souls as love them for his fake. If the holy places where Christ was on Earth are in fingular veneration, much more ought the states of Jesus Christ. If the men of the world think it a great honour to participate of the grandeurs of their Prince; how happy and Honourable ought a true Christian to think himself to be, if he be parraker of the humiliations of the King of Glory? The Crown and Scepter are the glory of a King: Poverty, Contempts, and Sufferings, are the glory of a Servant of Jefus Chrift.

In my third Prayer I was pierced with a wonderful feeling at the fight of Jesus suffering and dying on the Cross. Being not able to comprehend how the infinite Majesty of a God should condescend so low, I said, O my fesus! why did you not rather let all men perish? for its more just beyond comparison, that men should be lost, being Guilty,

Christian. 282 Lib. 4. Guilty, than you suffer, being most Innocent. But in this tryumph of your love, you have no regard to your felf, but to fatustie Divine Justice, and that Infinite Charity you have for your poor Brethren in their miserable condition. Suffer then even the death of the Cross, seeing, dear fesus, it is

your pleasure

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l'confider'd, the eternal obligations we have to Jesus Christ, in that he died for our Salvation. It feem'd to me that hitherto I had been as in darkness, in regard to this incomparable bene-Jesus Christ is our true and faithful Friend indeed; and yet, alas! he is neither known nor regarded as he ought, nor lov'd with thankfulness. He loves us so as to die for us, and we make no reciprocal returns. O the prodigious infentibility of men! Is then Jefus Christ a stranger to us, and not our God and Saviour? Does the History of his holy Passion pals with us, as a profane or indifferent thing? Ought not the bloody Tragedy of Calvary fill all Christian hearts with love and forrow? For my part, I could hide my head with shame, that I have so little compassion and love for Jesus dying on the Cross for our Salvation.

O my Jesus! I confess my fault, in that I have so little known my infinite obligations to you. But feeing your Grace discovers now to me more clear than heretofore what you are, I will never more lofe fight of you; I will love nothing more than You, and effeem nothing more than to do you honour. You are my true Father, my true Brother, true Friend, true King, true Redeemer. O how great a truth is it, that you are all in all unta

unto me! O that I have been to long without knowing you aright? O Jelus, how Happy an I that I have found you! Olet me never fo much

For my fourth Prayer, I flood at the Sepulcher of Jefus, and feeing his precious Body dead and covered with Wounds I made this Epitaph; Here hes Love. Yes, yes, here lyes Love in-deed, for his excessive Love to us, brought him to this state and condition. A Rate full of horror and wounds, Blood and Infamy; But a state well pleasing to God, as satisfying his Justice for mans Redemption. I embraced his precious Body, and kils d his Sacred Wounds; I adored Jefus in this state, and faid; Omy Soul, we must either cease to Lava Tesus, or die with him, seeing Love equalizes Lovers, and makes them alike. My Soulthen chose to die with Jethem alike. fus, and after many lighs and defires to pleafe her Beloved, the died with Jelus, never willing more to live a Natural and Humane Life, but a Life Divine and Supernatural, as that of Je-And I made for her this Epitaph. Here hes a Soul dead of Love.

Behold in what confifts the death of my Soul; tis to live no longer according to the natural Inclinations, but according to the motions of Grace; which are the Love of Poverty, Contempt and Sufferings. While these dispositions live in a Soul, the is dead to Senfual defires, and lives a Life of Grace, a Life Supernatural Therefore for the future I will never hunt after Honours, or Pleafures, or Riches willingly, and by Election; but I will either heartily forlake

them:

Christian. Lib. 4them; or if I ufe them, it shall be upon Divine Motives, for the good of my Neighbour, or for pure necessity; seeing That is the Will of God, the furest rule of all our Actions.

Tenth Day.

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Jesus risen from Death, and Glorious.

TN my Morning Prayer I consider'd the Glory of Jefus Christ in the state of his triumphant Refurrection. O Jesus how Glorious are you! How well does this become you? Verily 'twas a strange state whither your Love had brought you! A stare of Misery, Shame, and Sorrow. This was well for us Criminals, but in no fort agreeing to you, who are Innocence it felf: For what belongs to you, is Majesty and Glory, What joy did fwell my heart to fee Jefus Glotions? My Tongue cannot express what my Heart feels. This great Feaft of the Refürrection is to be celebrated by all Creatures, feeing 'tis the day wherein Jesus appears as God. O Feast of the Glory of Jesus! O Feast of the Glory of Mary! 'Twas a Miracle she did not die of Sorrow at the Death of her Son; and 'tis another Miracle she did not die of Joy at his Glorious Refurrection.

O my heart, be thou enlarged with Joy, for tis a general rule without exception, that the Interest of the Creator is to be preferr'd before all Creatures. And therefore O triumphant Jefus

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fus, I more rejoyce that you are Glorious, then that I hope to be Glorified with you. Yea, though I should never be raised, your Glory does ravish me. At glads me when I consider, that damnation only concerns the Creature; for the Interest of Jesus suffers not thereby; seeing God is Glorified by the Reprobates, as well as

by the Saints in Glory.

Tis also a certain rule, that the Elect, O Divine Jesus, are images of you, and so necessarily must resemble you in your Sufferings, if with you they will be Gloristed. Tis a folly to think not to suffer here some way or other, more or less, seeing the way to Glory is by Sufferings. O my Soul, be thou united to Jesus Crucified, and then thoughalt have part with Jesus Gloristed. To this end thou must love the Cross, and desire of Jesus To die, or suffer o World, thy way is meer folly, and nothing else.

these words of Divine Jesus: Onght not Christ first to suffer, and so to mer into Glory? I discovered how all the Divine Perfections did wonderfully shine south therein: But above all the Wisdom of God doth ravish those hearts which contemplate the works of Grace and Mercy. O Divine Wisdom how well is the Occonomy of your Mysteries order'd, to work our Salvation, and bring us to Glory? Every Mystery which consider'd, did raise a new Fire in my breast, to inflame my affections with the Love of Jesus. Sometimes they altogether did, (as with so many arrows,) pierce my heart, and made me languish with Divine Love, For seeing my self-

O Infinite Love of Jesus, for whom shall I have a heart, it not for thee? O Love, 'tis for thee my heart is reserved. Thy attracts are powerful enough, do not redouble them so sweet and charming; 'tis enough, my heart is for thee. O Love, except thou wilt have me die, do not wound me any more. Yet I will die willingly, if thou wilt have it so, on the Cross of Interiour and Exteriour Suffering, that

I may be conform to my Loving Saviour.

My third Prayer was a continuation of the Sentiments of the Love of Jesus. I made use of the words of great St. Anstin in his Consessions: O my fesus, you have wounded my heart with the arrows of your Charity, and I have devoted it to your Love. Since that you have scatter amy Darkness, and made your self known unto me, I have not forgot you. Since I had the Happiness to know you, I have imprinted you in my memory; there I find you, and I tast perfect Delights; and receive extreme for and Contentment when I remember you.

My Soul feeling Divine Fires within her, which did fill her with Pleasures, I did sing extempore Canticles to my Beloved, and though not methodical, yet they better express dher amorous languishings. Though alone in my Chamber, I spake of Jesus aloud, as if I had had many Auditors to be partakers of my Hap-

pincis.

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I make Collequies among many Lovers of Jefus. I think I hear St. Romuald say; My dear T 3

The Interiour Jefus, my sweet Love, the inestimable Object of my Defires, the Delight of Saints, the foy of Angels, who will give me to Love you as much by my Self, as they do altogether? Another answered; Seeing your Perfections, O good fefus, have no limits, the Love which all hearts have for you, ought to be Infinite. Another faid; O Saviour, the Fruits are Testimonies of true Love; your appear to me admirable in the effects of your Sufferings, and that bloody Death you endured for me. But what have I done as yet to testify my Love, or make you Love me? Another concluded, and said; Let us Love, and Suffer, and let us die by the bands of the same Love, which made fesus die upon the Crofs.

O Sacred Love, how kindly cruel art thou to those who fall into thy hands? For thou dost cut and mortisse, and humble, and annihilate. All thy Servants more or less carry the marks of thy Severity. St. Philip Nereus in his Ribbs; St. Francis in his Hands, and Feet, and very Heart. But O Divine Love, I sear not thy Cruelty; Mortisse me, Crucisse me, Burn me

Alive; I defire to die by no other hand.

The conclusion of all the Prayers of my Solitude, was an absolute abandon of my self to Jesus Christ; to whom I gave my self up in a new manner irrevocably, to live or die, to act or suffer, to be in such a state as best pleases him: Ardently desiring that his Sacred Love would make me die to all things but himself. The Martyrdom of Love is longer then that of Tyrants, and sometimes more tormenting; sighting against all our natural inclinations, breaking

Chiftian 2.89 Libra. ing through all oppolitions whatfoever, to practice the vintues of the Word Incarnate. Without doubt we fuffer much, to follow that Grace which calls us to die on a Crofs, poor, contemned, and abandoned. But he that Loves. finds (weetness in these Sufferings.

'Tis a great wonder to make a Creature of nothing: But 'tis a far greater to make a finner a Saint: And this, O Jefus, is the only work of your Grace. 'Tis you that are victorious and triumphant in all your Elect over the corrupti-

on and malignity of Sin.

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O Jesus, how great is the Power of your Grace? How is your right Hand glorified by working wonders? O Jefus, the Infinite fource of Power and Virtue, of Grace and Sanctity, of Beauty and Perfection, O that I have as yet fo little known you! In Heaven they only fee you clearly, but yet 'tis a Favour and Happiness beyond expression to have some knowledge of you in this Life. When I behold Jefus, my Soul wants words, and can fay nothing but fefus; and in faying felus, it says all it would, though it be ineffable.

O Jesus, vouchsafe me some little fight of you in this banishment, that my Soul may be comforted. Jesus, God and Man, the eternal Splendour and Crown of Saints, be you hereafter the only Object of my Defires and Love, that I may be fo united to you, as never to fuffer a separation.

When Jesus once possesses a Soul, her Thoughts are on him, her Words are to him, and her Love for him. She then lives in a region of Light, Beau-

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Beautiful beyond all expression; and in her ardours of Love, the seems wholly Passive to the operations of Jesus in her. Jesus is enlightning, enflaming, Piercing, and Consummating; jesus is more in the Soul then her self, and lives more in her then her self; all is converted into Jesus, by a co-operation of Love which she teels, but cannot explicate.

It seems to my Soul, that hitherto she has been but in continual amusements. How many vain Ideas have taken up her Thoughts? But at the sight of Jesus, all Creatures appear'd but as Dreams, and they fled before him, as Owls at Sun-rising. I know you then, O amiable Jesus, I see that you are Verity, and all the World but

Vanity.

Beau-

O Divine Jesus, reign for ever in my Soul, establish your Empire in my heart, and be absolute King there, for it is yours. Let all the Blessed Angels and Saints in Heaven, and all Creatures Bless you and Praise you, and help me to return you Thanks for all the Favours your Infinite Goodness has vouchfased me in this Retreat. Add this also, O most Merciful Jesus, to your other Graces, that I may have a perpetual dependance on your Holy Will, and live in you, and for you, who lives and reigns World withoutend, Amen.

The End of the Fourth BOOK.

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BOOK V.

Of Communion and its Effects.

CHAP. I.

Of Preparation before Communion.

Person that often receives his God in the Holy Communion, ought to direct all the Actions of his Life to that end, and render them a Preparation to it. And as those Acts whereby we prepare our selves, ought to be most Holy, most replenished with Grace; fo by consequence the Life of one that does often frequent the Sacrament, ought to be a continued exercise of Holy and Supernatural Acts. We ought to lead a Life worthy of the Divine Bread which is given us in this adorable Sacrament. A common and material Bread supports the Life of Nature : But he who is himself the Bread of Graces, bestows on us a Life of Grace, a Life Holy and Divine, and Infinitely rais'd above

The Interiour Lib.5, above the Humane Life: And therefore is little known, little fought by such as lead a common Life, and are unwilling to leave themselves and their Temporal concerns, to live to Jesus Christ, who to that end gives himself to them, that he

may be their Life.

O my God, how Ignorant and Earthly has my past Life been, fince I am so little acquainted with this Life more than Humane! But now out of your Mercy you vouchfafe to bestow on me fuch Sentiments as incline me to enter upon this Life: For I plainly fee that a Soul well settled in the state of Grace, ought to live no longer according to Nature, but according to Grace. The Motions, Maxims and Defigns of the Supernatural Life take their Original from Grace, and are of a very different relish from such as affect Souls, which move only by the impreffions of Nature. For the Soul actuated by this Life, embraces Contempts, Sufferings, Abjection; and her delight is to be annihilated in the efteem and love of Creatures; fo far it is from feeking those things, never so little. To live this Life, is to live the Life of Jefus, and to become one and the fame with him; and it is an excellent Disposition to live by him, while the Soul receives him as its proper nourishment: Qui manducat me, vivet propter me.

Your Delights, O Lord, are to be with the Children of Men: But these Delights ought to be Reciprocal; that is to say, That Souls ought to take their Delights in you, in your state of Poverty and Abjection, that so you may take your Delights in them. What an excess of

Good-

Goodness is this, O Lord, that being so great, fo full of Glory, you come to humble your felf. and to annihilate your felf in a Soul fo Criminal, so Unfaithful! 'Tis true, Abjections were not inconfiftent with the condition of your Mortal Life: But fince now you are in Glory, methinks you ought to be exempt from them. If my Soul had any Love for your Interests, she would not procure you fuch Humiliations: and therefore the would do better not to Communicate fo often; for then the would not be the occasion of humbling you so often. This Sentiment, joyned with the knowledge of my own unworthiness, would make me abstain from Communicating, if I did not know withall that your Delights are to be with fuch Souls as defire likewise to take their Delights in you, and that you have said in St. John, That if we do not eat your Adorable Flesh, we shall not have Life in you.

When I consider my Indignity, and yet present my self to Communicate, with a Soul that
is an ever-flowing source of Vices and Sins; I
should be very much afflicted to see Jesus Christ
so ill lodged in the midst of my Impersections,
not knowing in what part of my Soul I might
place him. Where he might not see things unworthy of his Presence. This sight would
doubtless cause me a great deal of pain, if another regard did not encourage me. I consider
that, when the Sun enters into a stinking and
and offensive Dungeon, he is received there more
in his own Brightness and Lustre than in the
Dungeon it self; and that so he is there without
pre-

The Interiour prejudicing his Grandeur or Purity, When I have this Idea before my eyes, I fay to my Lord: Tis true you enter into me all miserable as I am: But it is true also, that you are more in your Self, in your Glory and in your Brightness. Be therefore received in your Self, O Divine lefus, in your Beauty and in your Grandeurs, 1 rejoyce that the offentiveness and streightness of my Dungeon cannot prejudice your Beauties, or your Greatness. Enter therefore into me, without going out of your Self: Be received in me, but more in your Self, O bright Sun of Glory! Live for ever in the midft of your own Splendours and Magnificence; but do not ceafe to live also in the middle of my Obscurities and Mifery. Convert me unto you wholly, and without reserve.

CHAP. II.

To Communicate worthily, we must put our selves in a state consormable to that of Jesus Christ in the Blessed Sacrament.

Jesus Christ chose to give himself to us in this stupendious Mystery, in the state of Death, as to any thing that concerns the life of the Senses; but as a Fountain of Life in regard of the Interiour Life; a Divine Life, a Life of Grace, a Life of Contemplation and of continual application of the mind to adore the Majesty of God his Father: A Life, I say, poor, and nothing to the Exteriour, but shining with the

nitely rich under the vails of the outward Species that hid it from the eyes of the World. Thus and with these dispositions he presents himself to us, requiring that we likewise present our selves unto him with dispositions conformable

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His Sacred Humanity, that he gives us in the Holy Communion, was rais'd to a Divine Life by the Hypoftatical Union: So also must we be by Grace, viz. Our understanding must be elevated above it felf by a high illustration of Faith. and our Will inflamed by a fublime Sense of the Love of God; and fo in fine, our whole Soul must be animated with the Life of Grace. Othe Sublimity of the Life of Grace! How Admirable art thou, how High, how Ineffable! Thou raisest man from Earth to Heaven, thou makest him live in God, I, and of God 100, fince thou doft prepare him to live in this World upon the same Substance which nourisheth the Blessed in Heaven. O great Life of Grace! thou art poor to the Exteriour, but most rich to the Interiour: Thou appearest low, but art most high. Iam ravished with thy Beauties, I cannot live a moment without Thee, who makeft us live with a Life Divine, who placest the Soul in the heart of God, and disposest her to see God placed in her own Heart,

When the Charms and Beauty of this Life have once discovered themselves to the Soul, she willingly quits all other things, to imbrace them, and whatsoever else seems to her no better than Death and Corruption; she renounces the

World,

World, Pleasures and Riches; she condemns her felf to Pennances, Mortifications and Poverty, to obtain this Divine Life; and feels a Sacred hunger after this adorable nourishment that is her only support. O that I did throughly know, that I did Faithfully purfue this Divine Life, a Life so little known, so little practis'd in the World, where People do not thirst after the Living Waters of your Eternal Fountain. O my God! O Jesus, draw me after you through all the Actions and Duties of the Life of Grace, which is at its greatest height among Injuries and Miseries. Draw me, 0 Lord, and I will run after you in the Odour of your Perfumes. What a pleasure is it, O my Soul, to fee you march like a Gyant in the ways of Grace, nourished and frengthened in your course with the Bread of Heaven: Ambulavit in fortitudine cibi illius ufq; ad montem Dei.

To live in Death, (as Jesus seems to do in the Blessed Sacrament) to change Glory for Contempt, to be most delighted when one is annihilated and even Sacrificed, is the true Character of the Life of Grace. It makes all things die to the Exteriour, and live only to the Interiour, and above all things it confers the Spirit of Prayer, keeping the Soul almost in a continual exercise and elevation, by fixing its regard upon that Infinite and incomprehensible Being which she adores and is not able to understand, and therefore annihilates her self in his presence, suspended with admiration of those Divine Grandeurs which she sees annihilated in the Holy Eucharist. O my Soul, how great is

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What is man, that thou, O Lord, art mindful of bim; Doft vifir him and takest pleasure to come and dwell personally in him? His Soul is drawn out of nothing, his Body is but a piece of Clay, and still you vouchsase to set your eyes upon him! How can a Creature fo filthy, fo wretched, fo gross, receive within it the Infinite Majefty of God. Sink and humble your felf to the very center of your Nothing, and confess your Indignities, O my Soul. Cast down your eyes. and acknowledge that you are unworthy fo much as to lift them up towards this formidable Grandeur; and more than all be penetrated with the deep sense of Admiration, Gratitude and love of this excessive Goodness, which condescends in this incomprehensible Mystery to annihilate it felf, to come and give it felf to

We must needs be very much in Love with our condition of Interiour Captivity, where the Soul lyes bound and ty'd up in darkness and prifon. For this condition Honoureth the Captivity of Jesus confined to the narrow compass of a little Hoft. This Divine Lord of ours shuts himself up in this strait Prison for the Love of us. The King of Glory is contracted under these little Species, and so renders himself a Prisoner to man; yes, he renders himself in appearance his Slave; giving all of himself to man, and ftill Sacrificing himself to his Eternal Father for man: He still suffers (as I may say) and dies for man, and communicates to him all the merits of his precious Blood and Passion. O Di-

you even in the state of your own Nothing.

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vine Captive, captivate my heart so strongly that it may never be able to re-enter into in natural liberty: But that wholly destroyed and annihilated, it may never be capable of any other Life than that which is more than Humane: Never enjoy any other liberty than that of your Children. Let the World look upon them as slaves: And load them with all Indignities as the out-cast of men; in despite of all contempt they are still your Children.

Every time we approach to this Sacrament

Every time we approach to this Sacrament wherein Jesus Christ gives himself to us whole and entire, we enter into a new obligation and contract to give up our selves wholly & entirely to him, and to endeavour to render all our Actions Divine. Wherefore a Virtuous Soul ought not to say; I have not had time enough to prepare my self before Communion; for she ought to aim at no other thing in all the Actions of her Life, than to receive this Fread of Life, to the end she may live the Life of Jesus, and keep her self continually in such dispositions as she sees him in, in the Blessed Sacrament.

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To receive the Communion Worthily, we must imitate those Actions which Jesus Christ practis d when he Instituted it.

I remark Principally three Actions that Jesus Christ was pleased to do for our example when he instituted the Holy Sacrament: And we cannot make a perfect Communion without the practice of them.

1. He never performed any

Christians T any Exidriour &Ct of flich a profound Humility. In Truth he annihilated himfelf in the work of his Incarnation : Both according to his Humane Nature which he deprived of its Natural Subflance in an extraordinary way of conception: And according to his Divinity which he plunged into the Abils of Humane Mileries. Yer he debased himself farther when he chose a Stable to be born in. as the most Poor and Abject of Men: Still more when he condescended to take the Badge of Sinners in his Circumcifion; But the lowest Abis and center of annihilation was in the Chamber where he made the last Supper, and where he did a thing that is the most humbling of all Humane Actions, washing the Feet drying them, kiffing them with his adorable Lips, and this even to the greatest of his Ene-

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O my lefus, this is too much debaling of your Grandeurs, 'tis too profound a Humiliation of your Majesty. Tis my duty, who am a meer Nothing by the condition of my Being, and become less than nothing by the enormity of my fins; 'tis my duty to annihilate my felf under the feet of the vileft of Creatures. What an intolerable Pride would it be in me, if, having feen the God of Majesty humbling himself so profoundly to give example, and having heard him tell me fo with his own mouth : Exemplain deds vobis; ne & vos it à faciatis; I have given you in example, this you should do so as you bave fees me do: What a Pride (I fay) would it be in me to approach to your Com numon without the Sentimente

mies, and most wicked Misoreant that ever

lived, even to fudas.

The Uniteriour Libs.

similars of the greate fichumility that dean polfibly exhibitin any Antidn of my Life?

The Record Action our Divine Mafter pridi ced when he infittited this great Sacrament, was a fublime Prayer, one of the most perfect, a well as one of the laft that he made in all his Life, lifting up his Hands, Eyes and Heart to God his Father, by an Act of a most respectful Reverence. And though the was himself his own Heaven where his Father reighted, herecollects himself into this most Sacred Humanity as into a hew Heaven, and there addresses in Prayers to his Father who was prefent to him, and his first Petition is, Glorifie ibe, 'O Fucher; which is to fay, give me the joy of Humiliations and Opprobries of the Crofs, which I have follong defired and fighed after: Teaching his Church to look upon Contempts and Groffes as her Glory, and the greatest Honour she can defire upon Earth He demands also the Inftitution of this ineffable Mystery of the Holy Eucharift, which he was going to make in obedience to his Eternal Will and Decree, knowing that it was to be unto us a Fountain of Eternal Life, and un or himself the beginning of a perpetual Death, as continuing there in quality of a sacrificeleven to the confurmation of the World.

It is my Duty therefore, lafter this Example, to prepare my Soul to receive his Divine My-fleries by the most pure and most per fact Prayer, as God shall enlighten and inspresse. The most affored is, to apply ones self to him by a simple regard of Fairly, accompanied with Respect and Love, considering him sultof Graces, full

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Christian. 201 of Mercies and Blaffings in this awful Myftery, and that he comes unto us with all his riches. and gives himself without any referve, even repdring himse in a manner passive for all the deligns that he intends to accomplish within us. whether he comes himfelf in person to operate therethe marvellous effects of his Love. fole regard of Faith in its simplicity contains all the Perfections of other Acts. Tis sufficient to have God by Regard unto him and by Love; this is to attain to the end where the heart refts: All other Exercises of Meditation and Practices of Interiour Virtues are but only means to arrive unto God; when he is once found, the Soul

is to repose there and rest satisfied.

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The third and most endearing Action that I admire in our Lord when he Instituted the Bleffed Sacrament, and when he made his Love appear in its greatest Lustre, and in its most Ardent Fervour, as well towards God the Father, as towards Men, even his Enemies. When he comes into the World, his Love is a rifing San: But when he comes to leave the World, in the vigour of his Life, and in the excess of Charity that he shew'd in dying for us, he is a Sun in the heat of Noon day. The Gofpel tells us, That baving loved his own that were in the World, be kindled the flames of his Charity, and railed them to the highest point imaginable, when be Instituted the Hoty and adorable Sacrament; In finem dilexis cos. But that which is most inconceivable in it, which the most of any thing demonstrates the eminence of his Charity, is that he did not refuse the most charming and

The Interiour

most tender embraces to the most inworth and most persidious of all his Enemies. Independent whom Envy had already poisoned even to the heart, whom Avarice had perverted and made a Thies; Insensibleness had blinded and made ungrateful; whom Malice had correpted and made an Apostate, a Traytor, a very Devil; yet this Judas in this condition that he was, and in which Jesus saw him at the bottom of his heart, is not excluded from the eminent Grandeurs of the Love of our Saviour, which seeds this Demon with the Manna of Angels. O Love, how thou are admirable! O Love, how thou are invincible! an abundance of waters cannot

extinguish thy flames. The application

And now, my Soul, is it possible thou shoulds continue tepid and infentible while thou art near fo great a Fire? Hadft thou all the Ardours of the Seraphins, thou wouldft fill be too little on Fire to answer and reflect the Fires of that incomparable Love which inflames his hear: when he comes to give himself to thee : A good Religious Capuchin, called Br. Bonaventure, felt his Soul fo inflamed with this Sacred Fire when he approached to the Holy Table, that one day, a mong others, finding himfelf more than ordinary replenished with an Ardent defire to unite himfelf with God; and feeing the most Bleffed Sacrament in the Priests hand ready to Communicate him, his heart feem'd to make firong efforts to leap out of his Breaft and meet the only Object of its defires, which also broke forth into words: For the abundance of his Love forced out their amorous Afpirations flour MI Lib. 5. Christian. 303
My Jess! My Jess! But to let both
him and us know that the Love of Jesus in this
unspeakable Mystery surpasses all ours in an Insinute measure, the Holy Host quitted the Priest's
hand, and as it were all on a flame and encircled
with Glorious Rayes of Light, of its own accord, slew into the Mouth of this worthy Servant of God.

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CHAP. IV.

Interiour Entertainments during Commu-

Some times when I was Communicating, it came into my mind to think that my heart was an Aliar, and that Jesus Christ came to continue upon it the same operations that he had performed on that Aliar where the Holy Mass is Celebrated. Wherefore my heart received him lovingly and simply, united it self to all his Divine Operations relating both to his Heavenly Father, and to Creatures. And my Soul adhering to all his Adorations, all his Sacrifices, all his Love that he bears his Eternal Father, became wholly passive, like an Aliar upon which Jesus does all that he pleases, as well in regard of the Divinity, as in regard of Men to whom he distributes and dispenses his Mercies.

It seemed to me that in the first place he apply'd himself to honour his Divine Father, to annihilate himself before his greatness, to love his Goodness and other Divine Persections, and

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The Interiour 204 then he turned himself to succour my weakness. and thew his Mercies upon me, by giving me a glimple of what he is, and a fight of the ffrick and close alliance whereby I ought to be united tohim; that I ought not to sublift a moment but by his Life; that his Holy Spirit ought to animate my Soul, and be the first spring of all its motion, as my Soul moves my Body, and is the Principal of all its operations: That to live a Life purely Humane, is a state wherein though a Soul does not offend God, yet the cannot pleafe him; which is a thing Love cannot fuffer, nor will it endure that a Sout wherein it reigns should cease any one moment from pleasing her Beloved.

O Jesus, enter into so absolute a possession of my Soul that she may be wholly yours, and that she may never have any other motion than what your Grace gives her. This the great desire of my Soul, which would not live to you partly, and partly to Creatures; but that all the action of my Life be Consecrated to your Love. I have need of a Powerful Grace, O Jesu; to continue thus elevated above my self in all sort of occasions: But vouchsafe to magnific your Omnipotence in my weakness, your Mercies in my Miseries.

Another time after Communion. I had to presented to me the manner how all the Interiour Faculties of Jesus Christ in his Moral Life did most worthily Glorisie his Eternal Father: All the parts of his Holy Soul were taken up in this imployment; the Intellectual Power of the Superiour part the Beatifical Vision and Fruition;

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Fruition; the Inferiour part and his Body by a most perfect Suffering and faw the admirable connexion which was between these so different states, and their joynt accord to Glorific the Eternal Father: And the wonderful Occonomy of this facred Interious charmed my foul: I continually offered it up to God in the pressures I lay under him the midstof my troubles I entred into these Holy Dispositions, and united my Sufferigs with his, my Adiona with his Divine ones. This disposition remains deeply imprinted in me, and serves me for a comfort and support upon all occasion of our contempt, pains or any other affliction.

Another time my Interiour, entertainment during Communion was after this manner. I confidered that a Christian has but two concerns in this Life, how to maintain the Life of Mature, and that of Grace, thereby to arrive to that of Glovy. Generally men think of nor thing but the first, though it be of no consequence, and but for a moment, besides that is full of Miseries; and they forget the second, which is Eternal, and Infinite importance; yet scarce any body minds it, for every one lives in the darkness of imperfection, and the blindness of Sense. O what a Misery! And on the contrary, how Happy are they who fet no value but upon the Life of Grace, and confequently love those Exercise which nourish and inprove it, as Mortifications, Prayer, frequent Communion! O how clearly do I fee that I ought to difingage my felf from Temporal Affairs, to apply my felf more fully to the fixercilcs

The Interiour 306 cifes of the Life of Grace, and to pure Prayer I made another time my Action of Grace after this manner, An attention to the Predence of God before Communion had raised in me a great and awful respect towards that most Sacred Majefty, before whom the highest Sera phinrim Heavendo cremble . Theylike impres fion continued in metalfo after Communion: My Soul was all adoration feeing the adorable Jefus was become the Gueft's His Prefence heightned my respect, as being the Tource of all Graces, andor all good Dispositions. I saw himfelf allo fometimes paying a profound respect to God the Father and then I plunged my felf deeper, and even loft my felf in those Divine Respects y unwilling to come out of them And fearing least fome perfors should come to Visit me, and interrupt my Devotion, I hid my felf, that I might remain thus wholly plunged in this Sentiment of Reverence which

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Perfumed my Soul, agueda ', fill off and said

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Other Interiour Entertainments to give

The Dispositions most frequent with me af-

the Sacrament al Species, I Sacrifice to him all my Being, my Exculties and Operations in Homage to er I

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2. A second Disposition after the Holy Communion is, that fesus entring into me, presently operates a streight Union. At that time I have no sight of any that may annihilate me; only at first he unites me to the state of his Humanity in its Poverty and Abjections; the Contempt, Labours and Sufferings of his Mortal Life; and heigh hereby purified, next he draws me to a Union with the state of his Divinity, that is to say, to render to his Eternal Father, Love, Praises and complacency in his Grandeurs.

रिकारी शांचेंड मार्गितकरी, इसेंड 3. Another time after Holy Communion, thefe great words of our Lord presented themselves to my mindto serve for my Entertainment; Rogo Pater, ut fint consummati in unum: Father I beseech you, that they may be consummated in one. They disclose to me a little of that persect Unity, or consummated Union that ought to be contracted between Jesus and us: His Love requiring that our Souls Should be confirmed in that Union by the frequent ufe of the Holy Communion, and that they all continually according to the conditions of this Alliance; from whence they fall by the least Infidelity, and very much offend God, who fees himself pegletted, and as it were contemned and post-poned to Creatures, after he has called them to so perfect a Union, and come expresty to work it in them. WhereThe Interious Lib. 5.

where five a perfect Union requires that one heart
be unived sho make continually that spoffilly is can,
and sho is tend incoffantly to a Unity of Love
with fossis Shrift, to a Unity of Instinct, of inclinations, of Desires, and to a great conforming
with the condition of his Mortal Life, which is
elice whereby we were to walk during our present
Life, if we desire to arrive to the engayment of his
Divino Life.

A. Sometimes after Communicating, I have but ehis representation in my mind, that Jefus giving bimfelf to me, formed to speak to me, but without any kind of words: For the fole manifestation of his bave impersed to the Soul, is in lieu of speaking; and the Soul answers by Acquiescence and Admiration that cannot be expressed. the Soul in this state does not understand any Inte-Pione words, after the manner that Mystique Diwines explain them in their Writings: But the lively and clear representation that is made to but of the flate of fofus in each My flery, wisbant any shing offer for ver ber for Discourse. While she is in this condition, is forms so bor stree fofus fays, Heat Daughter, and fee, and forget your People, and the House of your Father, to enter into an imitation of me. Towbish words she Soul make unfiver by acquieffing, and without any noife in her Interiour, the figuifies her acceptance by a most efficacions confent. She hears by facing, and fehes freaks by manifesting himself;

Another white at the Communion I had a genoral view of the multitude of the great wonder 1

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eiders that Jesus operates in these Mysteries of Faith, in savour of Men, with whom he takes his Delight. This general view raised me to a high admiration, which nevertheless terminated in a sense of a most prosound acknowledgment of the Goodness of God, seeing that all these wonders tend to no other end than to mainisest unto us the intensences of the Love he bears us, and import that he expects Love for Love. That is your only design, my good Jesus, in bestowing on me this Divine Food, to bestow on me the Life of your Love; but this Life may very well cause my Death. O Love, Love, Love! was all that I could then say, being struck dumb with admiration.

CHAP. VI.

Another Method of Thanksgiving after Communion.

Find a great gust in the understanding of these words; Fortis oft as more dilectio: Love is group as Death. Methinks I see them practically verified in the Holy Communion, where I see that Love has reduced Jesus to the state of Death and of a Sacrifice immolated, as Death reduced him upon Mount Caloury. I consider, that while his Love severs him from the Splendours of his Glory to unite himself to the, it excites me at the same time to leaparate my self, from Greatures, from my Self, and from all other things, thereby to unite my self, and from all other things, thereby to unite my self to him alone. My Soul theroughly pinestrated

fign of her Beloved Jesus, and clearly differning that the love of Crosses and Contempt is necessary to dispose and prepare her for this great Favour, she looks on them with affection and delight, as so many Springs whence flows

then Happinelan to other examined and their

and Another wonder, which fometimes my mind has been intent upon, and received great Comfort from it, is the Infinite defire that God has to Communicate himfelf, and to lift us up to a full participation of his Divinity. This view well penetraced into, discovers so many wonders of the Love of God sowards Men, of the Felicities to which they are destined after the Miseries of this World, of the Dignity of their Creation (fince the end for which they were made is to possess God,) of the Infinite desire God has to unite himfelf to them, and of the perfect corresponding and complyance they are from thence oblig'd to, especially such Souls as are chosen, and in a particular manner called to this state, that after all this it is scarce polfible to refife fuch cogent impulses and attractives of God. They make one defire to die to all things, the better to prepare for fo great a work of Loves the burries and business of the World is not to be any longer endured, and one becomes passionately in Love with Solitudes My Soul, reflect diligently upon the Grace is given thee, and correspond to the Love of God towards thee, which thou art now so thorough; ly acquainted with: Thou haft no other business butthis; for thou must never betake thy self to inted

press orders from God for it.

The more one is estranged from Greatures, the better a Soul is disposed to this Divine Union, wherefore Difgraces ought to be our Feficity, because they are the means to obtain it. The Crofs, Purity of Love, Union, God alone: These are the degrees that Grace leads us

through, and our Fidelity calls us to.

There is also another good method of giving Thanks after Communion, which confifts in abandoning and refigning our felves absolutely and without referve to the power and dependance of Jefus Christ, who coming into our hearts, ought to be mafter there, and command as Soveraign: When it pleases him to continue with a Soul, to entertain her, and to unite her to him by a most delightful feeling of his prefence, we must not think that to remain thus united, is to do nothing; for 'tis the doing of all that God demands of us, and the co-operating with him in the greatest work of Grace, which is the Union of a Soul with the Divinity. This Union is a repose of the Soul, and it is found in feveral and different manners : Sometimes it is diffus'd through all the Soul, sometimes tis only in the Superiour part thereof; other while it reffrains it felf to the supream point of the Will; and if the Soul be Faithful, the does not confiderably interrupt this Union's For the trouble of the Interiour part, or distractions of the imagination, may indeed lesen the tranquility thereof, but cannot destroy it. The thing that weakens it the most, and as it were

were smothers it, are the Passions when wo lent, Cares that tough one to the quick, Troubles of mind, Pleasures of Sense; Wherefore one must be dead to all these, and endeavour to

die perpetually cothem.

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Another, time Jefus, entring into my Soul in Communion, did not impart to it this Union fo definable, bucdeprived it of it; whether icwere in punishment for her Impersections, or that he defigned her at that time for other Imployments, and required Exteriour Duties from her for the good of her Neighbour. Her business was then to remain in Peace, and to make a free offering of the most poble thing in the World (to wit, the enjoyment of God) to God himself, who takes an Infinite delight to see himself thus Honoured by his Creature. And he isoften pleas'd to be Glorified in this manner by perfect Souls, and the Souls find themselves raised to a very sublime Purity by these forts of Sacrifice, wherein they renounce the most dear Carestes of God, to ahandon themfelves more purely to God, and to adhere to him only. Ohow true is it, that in the fund of the heart the most noble operations of Love are performed, hidden from all the World, and known to God alone. Even the Soul it self does not know the Interiour Communications of God, sill after long experience, which renders her self skilful in the factors of the Super-natural Life, whether neigher Sense nor Reason can penetrate,

CHAR VII.

The first Effect of Communion, is to beges in us the Love of Croffes and Humiliations.

Od in Himself and in his Eternity, does no-I thing but Love Himfelf in contemplating his Divine Perfections. For itis his Effential occupation, and he cannot but Love Himfelf. and defire to be Beloved. Wherefore lines by the Hypoftatical Union man is become God, he takes upon him the fame Sentiments, the fame Inclinations as God : And by confequence Jofus Loves God, as God Loves Himfelf; and as the clearly faw that there is no way whereby God can be more Loved, or more Honoured, out of Himfelf, than by Groffes and Annihilations, which pay homage to the Grandeur of his Infinite Boing, he apply'd Himfelf to Love Croffes, Sufferings, and Consempt wishall the Powers of his Soul. Never man to pattionately inbove with thefe things as Jefus Christ, becanfe never any one was transported with such Zeal as he, to Love and Glorifie God his Facher.

When therefore Jesus enters into us by the Half Communion, he brings with him all his Sentimenes & all his Inclinations, particularly those which he affects most, and desires to imprint them in our Souls, for which purpose he gives himself to us under the form of moutistment; because, as the meat we take, communicates to the

The Interiour EF 14

the Body all its principal qualities, so he inspires the Soul withall its principal motions and operations. And this is the reason that the oftner one Communicates, the more one ought to be penetrated with the Sentiments and Inclination ons of Jelus; that is to fay; fo much more one ought to Love Sufferings and Humiliations: The property of the Communion, which is the Living Bread which descended from Heaven, is not to be changed into us, as the inanimate Bread, that comes from the Earth, is, but to change us into Himfelf. And the Holy Commamion should raise man above his Natural Love, to lift him up to the Love of God, and to a -perfect union with his Will, by Mortification

and Destruction of Himself.

The most inward and most Persect of all the Unions that a Creature can have with his God; is the Personal or Hypostatical one, which produced in the Sacred Humanity of Jesus, a Love of the Crofs, and of the Poverty ! Infomuch, that it was no fooner Divinely assumed, but it was inflamed with the Love of Suffering, and effeemed nothing, next to the Divinity, fo worthy an bbject of Love as the Crofs. Now it is evident, that we cannot arrive to any Union with God fo much resembling the Hypostatical Union, as that which we obtain by the Holy Communion: Whence it follows that it ought to produce in us fuch Inclinations as very much resemble those which the Union Hypostatical produced in the Sacred Humanity, that is to fay, it should incline us to Love the Grofs, Poverty, Humiliations, and all other manner of Sufferings,

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Lib. 5. O my Soul, where are we? How comes it about that we Communicate fo often, and feel still fuch repugnance to fuffer? Jefus Christ coming into us, and, as I may fay, again Incarnate in us, would not he confer the most fignal Grace of Love of the Crofs, if he found us well difpoled to receive it? He that Communicates often, and yet is unwilling to fuffer, without doubt Communicates but imperfectly: For he does not receive the principal effects of the Divine union, which are, to make us love what lefus foved the most of any thing in the World. O my God, how long shall we live in the low Sentiments of Nature? Give me, to suffer, or to die. O my Soul, be ashamed to live without Suffering, for That, methinks, is to live without Love.

The Fruit which we gather from the Holy Communion, is not discerned by abundance of sensible sweetness, or by reception of much Light in the understanding, but by a firm and vigorous refolution of the Will to fuffer and to mortifie it felf; and the more one advances in Mortification, the more one also increases in purity of Love. Jesus, who is the nourishment of our Love in Heaven, where Love will be Infinitely pure, is likewise the nourishment of our Love upon Earth, (in the Bleffed Sacrament,) which by confequence ought to be Soveraignly pure, I mean, without any mixture of any thing that is not God. But this cannot be without dying to all Greatures, and even to our Selves; and this Death is not compassed but by Mor tification, and all that which Crucifies Nas ture. X CHAP.

CHAP. VIII.

Continuation of the same Subject.

A Free Holy Communion, it seemed to me that as Jesus received of his Divine Father the Fullness of Light and true Love, in the Hypostatical Union, so he makes his Friends partakers thereof in the Sacramental Union; and thereby lays an obligation upon them to live by the same Life, to guide thereselves by the Light, and to enter into a Comformity to all his States. This Divine Light discovered to me a great many Verities very important for my direction and conduct.

For the Spirit of Christianity is the Spirit of the Cross: The Grace that feeds and supports it, is the Fruit of the Cross; and the adorable Bread so full of Delights, inspires no other Sentiments then those of the Cross; Venite mittamus lignum

in Panem ejus.

2. That as Jesus manifests the Purity of the Love he bears us, by dying for us upon the Cros; to ought we to prove the Sincerity of ours, by nailing it to the Cross. 3 That he worked our Salvation by the only means of Sussering: Therefore it is a manifest deceit to hope that we can co-operate towards our Salvation by any other means than that of Sussering.

4. That we must attend and harken very diligently to the Spirit of Jesus within us, which

Lib. 5. Christian

of it felt fornetimes furnisheth us with Creffes of Providence, or else inspires us to seek them of our selves. We must embrace them all cheerfully, or search them amorously. 5. That no other Soul but what is in Love with Crosses, can tast the ways of the Spirit and its Heavenly Sweetness: For God who mixes the Pleasures of Worldlings with Wormwood and Gall, does often sweeten our Sufferings after an admirable manner.

Moreover I was taught in the Holy Commanion, that Jesus is a Sun, which was Eclipsed during this transitory Life, but now shines in Heaven full of Lustre and Glory. And according to the measure Souls partake of his Eclipse and Darkness, they shall proportionably share of his Splendours in Glory. Why then slee we Poverty, Contempt and the Cross? For that which Eclipseth a Soul, with Jesus Christ, is the

Seed of an Immense Glory in Heaven.

What is the reason that we see nothing but Cross in Churches? All the Alcars are adorned with the Cross, the Priest going to Celebrate weares the Cross in his vestments; while he is saying Mass, while he is saying Mass, he makes a great many Signs of the Cross; when he is about to Communicate to us, he first gives us his Benediction with the Sign of the Cross; even the last Action he does, holding the Blessed Sacramens in his Hand, and ready to present it to us, is forming the Sign of the Cross with the Sacred Host. We are told also, that in Antient times, when Christians received it in their Hands, they placed them in form of a Cross, laying

laying the Right Hand a Cross over the Lett. What can we learn from all this, but that the Christian who Communicates, ought to be Crucified? and that as he receives his God among Crosses, so he should take delight in passing his

Life amongh Sufferings.

My Soul, when shall I begin the practice of a Life wholly Grucified, a throughly Christian and Supernatural Life? When shall I love Poverty, Contempt, Affronts, Injuries; O my God, that I might begin this very day to ferve you, and trample upon all the Sentiments of Nature, which ought to be continually upon the Crofs? And therefore I ought not to be troubled at fuch things as impoverish and ruine me: The more poor, the more dead one is to the World. Lought even exteriourly, (if People would believe me,), to live poorly, and become vile and contemptible in the eyes of men, following the example of Jefus Christ, who lived thirty years in a Shop like a Servant. Therefore it is my Duty to tend contrary to all that which the World, with its Wisdom of the Flesh esteemeth: And that suddenly, for I am al. ready grown Old, and have not yet begun. In becoming wretched according to the opinion of the World, I shall answer the Grace of my Vo cation, who am called to Poverty and a Solitary Life. I shall obtain Peace, and become ? man of Prayer. Affift me with your Powerful Graces, O Jesus, and grant me Perseverance.

Let us follow Jesus, O my Soul; He, from the very first instant of his t ife, walked like a Gyant in the ways of Humiliations and Suffe-

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Lib. 5. rings, the ways that his Father appointed him: All his concern was to co-operate with his Fathers Eternal purpoles which regarded himfelf. Let us walk couragiously in the rough and Holy Paths which Jesus has traced out; Let us not fear our Natural Weakness, since he did not fear his Humanity, but shew'd himself obedient even to Death, and to the Death of the Crofs. Let us count every thing Folly that is contrary to this Wisdom; and let us quit, one for all, every thing else to follow none but him.

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CHAP. IX.

The second Effect of Communion, Transform us.

He following confideration after Communion entertained me long, and continued a whole Morning: That the principal Effect of Communion is to produce in us an intimate Union with Jesus. This Union is a perfect Assimulation to his States and Mysteries. And this Assimulation is the same thing which they call a Transformation into God, and renders a perfon wholly Divine, and devoted to the Interests of God, infomuch that by Grace he becomes Divine, as having no other Inclinations then those of God, living by the Life of God, and defiring nothing but the Love and Glory of God.

In this fight which appeared to me very clear, I beheld the lowness and impersections of Smans

210 of fuch Sentiments and Actions as are meerly Natural; I wondered at the blindness of men. who fet fuch a value upon an operation of Nature, though it be of it felf fo infinitely vile and contemptible. It feems they never underfood the importance of advancing towards Perfection with all their force, nor the milerable condition of an imperfect Soul. This Light wonderfully separated me from Imperfection; and I am now as full of Horror of it, as I was formerly full of Sin. It feemed to me that Jesus, who so prodigiously debaseth himself in the Bleffed Sacrament, by a Miracle of Love, of Mercy, and of incomparable bounty, did thus excite me to rife from Nature to Grace, and and from a Humane, to a Super-natural Life: Towards which I felt in my felf fuch ftrong Inclinations, and fuch powerful Obligations, by my frequent Communions, that I had rather have died, than have paffed one moment of my Lifein the frate of Nature.

inWe ought to tend incessantly to the Purity of Jesus, and if to enter into it more readily and more perfectly, one must quit Honours, Goods and Friends, let us quit them, my Soul, and take in their places, Poverty, Contempts and Pains. The Purity of Virtue charms me and animates me to purfue it? I do not find any Creatures that I do not willingly abandon, not

any difficulty that I do not easily conquer.
O my God, separate me by your Holy Grace from every thing which hinders this Divine Transformation; and grant that I may ceafe to be what I am according to Nature, that I may

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become what you are by the power of Grace. When thall I'be wholly united, and transformed into you? When shall I quite forget my felf, and be no more, and act only in you, and you in me . (in me manet, & ego in eo :) and continue thus Absorped in you all the days of my Life ? Being thus united with you, I shall learn your fecrets, discover your purposes, and see, with you and your Lights, the ways that you take to Love, Honour, and Glorifie your Father, which he revealed unto you at the instant of your Incarnation. Ever fince that Happy minute you are become the Light of the World; he that will follow you, shall not walk in Darknels. Who can know the Secrets of the Father better than the Son; or his Defigns and Thoughts, than he, who being equal to his Father, is privy to all the Sacred Councels of the Divinity? These he teaches us by word of Mouth, he opens them to us by the comportment and examples of his Life. Let us fee, approve, imitate: Herein consists the right Transformation.

The Grace bestowed on us in the Holy Communion, principally rends to annihilate in us all
inclinations of Nature; and in their place introduceth others most conformable to those of
Jesus Christ; according to the measure that a
Soul conforms to Jesus Christ, proportionally
she becomes more capable of Divine Communications: For a Soul grows not more pure,
but in as much as she participates of the Spirit
of the word Incarnace, whose whole aim is to
Crucisie us to all that is meerly according to the

Lib.

Inclinations of Nature. How different is the judgment and discernment of true Christians from those of Worldly men! How quite another thing are the Thoughts and Convictions of an Illuminated person, and those of one who lives only according to Reason! There are Souls upon which, Jesus, entring into them by wayof Communion, makes fuch admirable impressions, that Lead turned into the finest Gold by the Philosophers. Stone, would not be more changed than they are. For in effect this Sacrament is the Mystery of the Omnipotence of Ged where the words of Confectation, by a Miraculous Power change the Substance of Bread and Wine into the Body and Blood of Jesus Christ: By which mutation we are instructed that under the weak and common Species lyes a fecret Virtue, which is able to transform the most Imperfect Souls into the greatest Servants of God.

One of the things in the World that most astonisheth me, is, that when we receive Jesus in the Holy Communion we are so little changed, and his Presence so un-active in us. We experience none of his wondrous operations. He ought to be to the Soul a grain of good Seed, that makes very great productions. Jesus ought to do admirable things, Jesus ought to form Jesus in us, and produce by his Grace all his own Sentiments, and fill our Life with all the States of his: Yet he makes no change in me; he does not strip me of my Humane Inclinations, that I may live the Life of Jesus: A thing which frights me very much, and gives me reason to fear that I do not approach unto him

Lib. 5. Christian. 323 with all the preparation requisite: Whereupon I flee to the Mercy of God, and beg it with all instance, for in that alone is my Hope.

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CHAP. X.

The third Effect of Communion, which is the Perfect and Consummate Union.

The design of our Lord in giving us the Blessed Sacrament, is layd open to us in the Prayer he made to God the Father while he was actually Instituting it: Rogo Pater, ut sint unum: I ask you, That they may be made partakers of the Union that is between us. Wherefore the Union he enjoys with God the Father, is the model of that which he desires we should contract with him by means of this Divine Sacrament. Now He is so much one with his Father, that whosoever sees Him, sees also His Eather: And if we were transformed into Jesus Christ, according to his intention in the Communion, whosoever should see us, would at the same time see Christ.

But this Confummate Alliance with God is not discernable in the most of those that receive the Communion: Because that Consummation pre-supposes another, which fails in the greater part of Communicants, viz. The Consummation of the Soul in Jesus Christ; which is then obtained, when by the attractions of Grace she is wholly annihilated as to her Natural Inclinations, and the Super-natural succeed in their place, being cleared from all dispositions

ons but those of the word Incarnate. A Soil in this state, receiving the Holy Communion, ought to remain simply united to Jesus present, and receive in quietness and tranquility such esset of Grace as he works in her; which are, to live no longer to, or in her self, but to enter effectively into the poor and abject state of Jesus, to live like Him, to live by his Spirit, to live no longer as the World, nor by the Spirit of the World.

Moreover the Union of the Divine and Humane Nature in the Person of Jesus Christ, is another most expressive Image of the Union he affumes us to by the Virtue of this Sacrament. For we affuredly believe, that his Sacred Humanity is wholly abforpe and plung din the Divinity, after such an unspeakable manner, that there is no comparison which can be drawn from any Created thing, may ferve to illustrate it. To compare it with the Stars which are loft and drowned in the Light of the Sun, is a too weak and imperfect familieude, and falls infinitely fhort; for there is an immente distance and disproportion between Divine and Created things. But the Soul needs not fuch affusions; The is contented to behold it in God by the obfcorer Light of Faith, and thereupon falls into Acts of Admiration, Adoration and Love: and differning that the intention of Jefus Christ, by uniting himself to her in the Riessed Sacrament, is to perfect her in himself, the accepts of it joye fully, and religns her self emisely to the Divine operation, and wishes she could say with St. Paul, Vivo ego, jam non ego, vivit vero in me Christini,

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Christian. Lib. 5. Christus; I am no more, I live no more; but fe-(as Christ is my Life and my Being.

Now it is evident that this high and Confummate Perfection is the effect of an eminent Love, and that it cannot beraifed to fuch a degree, without destroying in the Lover every thing that is not God, and by consequence it costs Nature dear, and requires a firm and generous Soul, and very Faithful to the impressions of Grace. Light and Knowledge are ineffectual of themselves to this great work: Nothing but the real and earnest practice of pure Virtue, in the full extent of the Grace given us, and as occafion shall afford the exercise, can bring a Soul to this eminent Perfection.

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Such a Soul cannot be more charmed and delighted, than to observe the amorous inventions of the Wisdom and Mercy of God, in deriving upon Christians the Fulness of his Divinity by means of the Bleffed Sacrament, where Jesus Christ presents us his Humanity, to draw us into partake of his Divinity. O how great is the dignity of pure Souls when they Communicate! O how low and abject are all the Grandeurs of the World! They are a meer Nothing compared with this. For what Glory is comparable to that of a Soul intimately united with the Supream Being! My God, how delight ful and transporting is the fight of the Wonders and profound Secrets wrapt up in your My-Reries; how they penetrate the Soul you difclose them to!

This Union with Jefus in Communion is ineffable. For as the Father and the Son are one

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The Interiour Lib. 5. 226 in Unity of Essence; the Word and Humane Nature one in Unity of Person; so the Soul that is one in Jesus, partakes of both the Unions. Divine and Humane. Jesus is in her according to both his Natures; and she is All in Jesus; and while she does all things in him, he works all in her, he Prayes, Adores, Loves, Suffers, Labours; infomuch, that this perfect Union produces a certain Unity between God, Jesus, and the Soul, and between all their operations. It fettles a kind of Partner thip and Community of Goods and Possessions between them: In a word it imports more than can be expressed. Now this condition must needs be most Holy and Divine, where God works in the Soul, and the Soul in God; In me manet, & ego in eo: And the Alliance between them grows continually fireighter and eloser, proportionably to her increafings in Virtue in this Life, and receives its

Damiable Jesus, with what a profusion of Goodness and Love you entertain our Souls in this Sacrament? You conceal your Presence under the External Species, to give us occasion and advantage to exercise our Faith, which beholds you so much more clearly, as you are more secretly and obscurely present. Again, on the other side you manifest and shew your self by innumerable effects of your Grace and Divine Sentiments which you breath in the Soul; to excite and exercise our Love. What can a Soul do, when she sees her self so prevented, so convinced, so pressed by evident instances and experimental proofs of your endless and

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Lib. 5. Christian, 327 unwearied Bounty? What can she do but Love, Love without stint, render Love for Love? how many excellent things might be said upon this Subject! But how can those Sentiments be expressed, that can hardly be conceived!

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CHAP. XI.

The fourth I ffett of Communion, is to Confer the highest Love.

Frentimes before and after Communion, I was taken up with Contemplating the Which being one and the Perfections of God. same in themselves, yet they are different in our manner of conception, and the verity of their effects. Now when any one of them difcovers it felf, it appears in full Beauty and Majefty, and all the other feem to fink in to it, and lend all their Ornaments and Excellence to increase its Lustre. An instance hereof we have in the Eleffed Sacrament, where the Divine Love displayes all its Magnificence, and the other Attributes contribute to that defign the brightest of their Charms and Perfections, Eternity, Immensity, Wisdom, Omnipotence, Justice, Mercy, and whatfoever is most eminent and adorable in the Divine Nature, are present there, and attend upon the triumph of Love.

Each of these Perfections espouse the Interests, and put on the Inclinations of Love, which are Liberality and Magnificence, and accordingly operate in a Soul, when Love makes his trium-

phant

Phant entry at the time of Communion. For Love as its proper effect produceth in the Soula reciprocal Love; Eternity imprints continuance and perfeverance; Immensity spreads the Affection and gives it an unbounded extent; will dom sheds round about a Super-natural Light, to guide its good purposes, and illustrate the ways of Virtue: Omnipotence inspires an invincible strength to surmount all difficulties and obstacles. Thus in Communion a Soul does not only receive the impressions of Love, but of Love attended with the Lustre and Excellencies

of all the Divine Perfections.

It is observable, that Jesus Christ, together with his Eternal Father, fent the Holy Ghoft upon the Apostles to replenish them with Love; in the fame place where he had given them Himself in the Sacrament. So that this Divine Sanduary was chosen two several times to be the Theater where the two greatest Actions of Love were represented, that ever the goodness of God exhibited, out of himself. The first, in giving us his Son to relide in our Hearts, who from all Eternity refts in his own Bosom, and thereby enabling us to live Divinely by him, as he lives by his Father. The fecond, in fending on us the adorable Spirit of the Father and the Son, to be the knot of the Eternal Espousals of the Soul with her God, to Beaut fy her with his In created Light, to warm her with his Sacred Flatnes, to animate her with his Heavenly Force and Virtue; and in a word to render her entirely Spiritual: And both these Actions are perpetuated in the Holy Church, when at the same time

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time we are Featted with the precious Body of the Son of God, and inebriated with the

Spirit of his Love.

O who can conceive the admirable Commerce and Careffes that are interchanged between Jesus Christ and pure Souls in this Divise Sacrament! The World, which differns nothing but by medication of the Senfes, is too gross and flupid to comprehend them. It thinks that Souls which are escaped from its snares, and distant gaged from its bufinels, lead an idle and unprofigable Life; it fancies they do nothing, because their Actions are not feen; that their Fire is ex tinguished, because it does not blaze in the eyes of Men. But on the contrary, they refemble those Mountains sull of Sulpher, which carry vast Globes of Fire in their Bosomes, though they break out but at certain times, and then they are not only feen, but whole Provinces feel the Conflagrations, Towns and Villages are Burned, and Fields covered with Ashes. In like manner those retired Souls which burn inwardly with Divine Love, and for the most part shine only to God and themselves, yet when the command and fervice of the Lord excite them to External Duties, they produce fuch extraordinary Effects, that numbers of Souls are fet onfire with their Virtues, Example and Inftructions. In this kind we have had many great Servants of God, who having conceived a thoufand good defires in their retirement, and inflamed with Heavenly fire by the frequent use of the most Holy Communion, issue from their tetreat and this Sacred Table, like Lyons, breathing

thing nothing but flames, and setting all on fire about them. Such have made the great Conversions of Sinners, changed the face of whole Provinces and Kingdoms; and all this performed only by one, or a small number of such Servants of God, who appeared so powerful in Works and Words, that all their Actions seemed to be so many Miracles.

Here we must observe that this Interiour Fire in a person not sufficiently retired within himfelf, or that from time to time is not careful to lay on more Fewel to nourish it, I mean, to elevate his Heart by frequent Prayer to God, and Contemplation of his Divine Perfections, or that diffipates his Spirit abroad by the impulses of Nature, engaging himself in Temporal Affairs, without being called thereto by the Inspiration and guidance of Grace, though fomething of zeal appear in the thing, and (as one thinks) a good intention: I My, this Interiour Fire in fuch a Perfon, is to be compared to these Meseers or Lambent Fires, which are carried about with every motion of the Air, and shine, but wardly and Divine Love, and for throughton ob line only to God and them elves, vet when the

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CHAP. XII.

The fifth Effect of Communion, is to give Strength and Perseverance in the Service of God. noting ald miles

Ne day as I entred into a Church, I heard them fing these words in Honour of the Bleffed Sacrament; Ambulavit in fortitudine cibi illins usq; ad montem Dei. He walked in the strength of this Bread, even to the Mount, of God. These words affected me, and made me Hope, that notwithstanding my Mileries and continual weakness, I might be so strengthned by receiving this Divine Bread, that at last I might arrive to the Mount of God, might raise my self above the low inclinations of Nature, and mount to the participation of the Spirit of Jesus; and Persection of a Super natural Life; which Life is a high Mountain, which no body can climb by the meer strength of Naturc.

I observed before, that the peculiar intention of Jesus in Instituting the Holy Sacrament, was to give us a foundation to Life and Strength; and for that reason 'tis the only Sacrament that is given in the form of Nourishment. The rest are prescribed by way of Remedy, to purge the Soul from Sin; or conferr'd by Geremony of Confecration, to dedicate the Person to the peculiar Duties of Religion and Holy Things, and so others respectively; But this is the only ons

one given by way of Heavenly nurture, to enable us to live by the Life of Grace, a perpetual Life, over which the death of Sin has no power. For Jesus Christ, among other effects of this Divine Food, assures us that is bestows Eternal Life: Qui mondature bank panem. vivet in aternum.

And it seems very reasonable and conform to the Infinite Goodness of God, that the most excellent of Sacrament: Should confer the most excellent of Graces, which is that of Perseverance. A Grace so Sublime, so Divine, so precious, that we cannot merit it by any or all the good Actions we can do. But how rate and how noble soever it be, we have much subject to hope, that the Father of Mercies, and God of all Consolations, will grant us it, since he has already epriohed us with that which is Infinitely more than this Grace, the Presence of his only Son in the Blessed Sacrament.

Corporal Nutriment is Elementary and Material, and therefore no better than Corruption. Yet if the Body could take it always in a just proportion, and were perfectly well disposed to draw the strength it affords, it would continue our Natural Life; and we should never die. How much more would the Heavenly Bread, the Living Bread, which contains in it self the ever flowing sources of Life, confer a perpetuity and infectibility of Spiritual Life by Grace, if the Soul duly used, and were disposed to receive the abundance of Graces, Virtues and Super-natural strength that this adorable Food brings with it? When we Communicate

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municipate the drink of the fame Fountain the Maleudovia Heaven. But to them it is the Water of differ Everlatting; and what elfe can in be to us but that of the Life of never failing Grace, which is the pledge and afforance of the Elemity of Glory?

Omy Sout don thou think that any of the Bleffed in Heaven, after they have tafted the Delights of that Torrent of Pleafures, can be doy'd with them, or be contented to be deprived of the Divine and Happy Life? How then came thou be to unconstant and irrelolute in the way of Grace, and unfaithful in the Union then hast contracted with God, who hast drank the Waters of Joy from the fame Foundains of thy Saviour? When he presents himself really and in Person, and demands to be admirred into thy Heart, fay not to him as St. Perer did, Retire from me, O Lord; But breath out the Sentiments of perfect Love, faying with the Spoule; Tenni cam net dimittam: I will sever abunden him.

O whar a pleasant Society, how profound a Peace does the enjoyment of the Soveraign Good bring to the Soul! But both imperfect, vill they are finished in Heaven, The fullest possession thereof the can acquire on Earth, serves only to inflame her thirst more; the more the rafts God, the more the defires him; and have there is no possibility of satisfying her defire in this Life, the fuffers a continual Martyrdom that makes her both die and live together, Her pain is full of sweetness, that Iweetness begets a languishing and longing after

The Interiour Lib.s. affer her Beloved of She is difgusted with all created things, and forceably drawn off from them. Nothing pleaseth her in this condition but that which augments her flame ... She cannot read with fatisfaction, unless there be some mention of her Beloved. All Conversation and Discourse are burthensome and tedious, unless the subject be his Love on a gaveaH m

My God, you see the bottom of my Heart. I conceive things that I cannot utter. Tis true I suffer, but I would not but suffer. I can do nothing but aspire to a fuller possession of your Infinite Goodness. Tis very much that you vouchsafe to give your self unto me in the adorable Sacrament with fuch an immense Love; but still you give me only a hidden Treasure, I posses you indeed; but do not enjoy you to my hearts defire: I am in the condition of Holy Simeon, who held you in his Arms in the Temple, and yet dyed with a defire to see you. It is time, O Lord, now permit my Soul to depart in Peace, and quit this Mortal Life, because I receive within me the Spring and Source of Immortality. I know for certain that in Paradice I shall obtain the perfect accomplishment of all my Defires; yet I do not defire it till it be your good will and Pleasure. Your Love makes me press forward and tend incessantly to the Beatifical Union; but 'tis your Love too that stops my course, that draws me back, inspiring me with the highest indifference and absolute dependance on your Divine Will.

O Jesus how admirable is your Providence! you open my eyes to see the comfortable and artes

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Bleffed fight of the Power and Purity of Love which ought to possess the Soul that has the Happiness to receive you often in the Holy Communion. I relinquish and relign my felf more than ever into your Divine Hands, guide me as it shall best please you. There is nothing left to ask you more, fince you have (unasked) bestowed your self upon me, and crowned me with Mercies, even beyond all my Hopes. My bufines is to remain annihilated in your presence, and quietly receive your Divine in action ons, and fulfilling your merciful intentions upon me, which are very great, and above the comprehension of him that receives them. For who can comprehend how the Infinite Majerry of God should lodge and be received in so vile, foffreight, so unworthy a place as the Heart of Man?

The coming of the Kingdom of God into a Soul, Sounds very delightfully, and feems fweet; I, but the poor heart must first prepare to suffer the violent pains of a continual Agony. The heart where God Almighty reigns, must bid adieu to all Humane Life. She dies to all Pleafures, to all Confolations, even Divine: She has no more support, no more relyance upon Creatures: even the most Holy: The bent of Nature and all Humane Inclinations are extinguished in her; she has no more a mind for one thing than for another, unless it be for a Supream Indifference; nothing but Abjections, Annihilations, Poverty, De-reliction, are her Portion: She is not capable of any other knowledge than that of Jefus Crucified; and her Wif. dom is Folly to this World.

The Interious, &c. Liby This is the manner Lought to depend on your Grace, OBleffed Jefus, and have continual recourse unto you. For you are my hather, who nourish me with your own Substance, you are my frength, and support my weakness: You are my Center, where all my Agitations and Inquiecudes reft, and are at an end : You are my End, and utmost term of all my Desires. At present I have no clear fight of the Purity of your Love; but only feel in my felf forceable Inflincts that incline me to defire the Purity of Love, and make me frequently break out into fuch Expressions as these: O pure Love! O durable Love! Happy is he that feeks thee; more Happy he that has found and possesseth thee; But ah! incomparably most Happy, Happy beyond measure he that Perseveres with thee, and Dies in thy embraces! business of the mo

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BOOK VI.

Of Interiour and Exteriour Crosses.

CHAP. I.

That we must have a high esteem for Crosses.

I Esteem it a great Happiness when we suffer any thing for Gods sake, there being nothing on Earth, whereby we can better testifie the Honour and Love we have for him. Tis in this state we are in a capacity to offer up to the Divine Majesty excellent Sacrifices, and render to him most signal Services. We cannot do more for a Friend than to procure his Glory by our own Destruction, and make our selves nothing to make him All. Hence it is that Saints have set up a higher value upon their Sufferings in Prisons and Chains for the Name of Jesus, than to be wrapt up with St. Paul into the third Heaven by Contemplation.

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Lib. 5, Be comforted then, O my Soul, in the different states wherein thou findest thy felf, so it be that thou doft fuffer something for God, it is enough. If thou haft not the gift of Prayer, but art in in aridity of Spirit, suffer, and be content; there is more merit in this, than in the most ravishing Contemplation. Art thou afflicted with Sickness, and so deprived of hear. ing Mass, and receiving the Bleffed Sacrament? Suffer and be content; for 'tis better to be in the rigours of the Crofs, than in the sweets of Spiritual Exercises. If thou canst do nothing for the good of thy Neighbour, fuffer, and be content, for 'tis less meritorious to act for God, than fuffer for him. If thy Exercises of Devotion and good Defigns do not succeed as thou expecteft, suffer and be content, for 'tis better to fuffer, then to have all things according to thy defires. If thou haft any deformity of Body, or no great Parts of Mind, provided thou suffer this Patience, no Person can do better, for this pleaseth God, Believe me, the best Science in the World, the best Prayer, the greatest Happinels, is to know how to fuffer for Gods fake.

We have a very great effeem for the Wood of the Crofs of Christ; we search after it with no small diligence; no person can present us with a more precious Relique; We Enchese it in Gold, we keep it near our Heart, we have a Veneration for it, and preserve it Religiously; and not without reason, because 'tis a small Relique of the true Cross of Christ: In like manner true Christians, the Children of Light, do highly esteem those little Mortifications,

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Lib. 5, whether active or passive, they undergo, finding nothing more precious upon Earth; and a greater guift cannot be presented to them, then the occasions to suffer and mortifie themselves, which they embrace with Joy and Love, and with great respect cherish them, not near, but in their Heart; confidering that the state of Suffering is most agreeable to the dispositions of Jesus Christ, and some small participation of his Sufferings. Tisas a little Parcel of the true Cross, and the most precious Relique they can carry about them.

Let's never be without having with us fome of the true Crofs; let us make much of what afflicts us, and we have Reliques thereof before we think on't. When we examine our Confcience, let us ask our selves this question: Haft thou, O my Soul, any parcel of the true Crofs? Any Reliques of the Sufferings of Jefus Christ? Happy are those who have tome part of them, for they enjoy the occasious of the great tryals and proofs of their Love to Christ, as can posfibly happen. The flames of Divine Love burn brightest in the furnace of Affliction. St. Paul had a good piece of the true Cross, when he faid, He carried in his Body the Marks of the Lord Jefus Christ; for his Sufferings were indeed for Jefus's fake.

The most noble and glorious thing that Christ did upon Earth, was his Dying for us on the Cross, a Death most Painful and Ignominious, that his Heavenly Father might thereby be Infinitely Glorified; and he being thus exalted, might draw the hearts of Believers after him,

and

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and more powerfully engage their Affections to

A Soul that beholds Jesus on this Throne of his Ignominies, which indeed is the Throne of his Grandeurs, desires here on Earth to be united to Jesus Crucified, as the Saints in Heaven enjoy him Glorified And thus she breaths forth her Desires: True it is, I cannot have a full Fruition of my Well-beloved in this Life; however this is my comfort, I can suffer for him. Enjoyment is more sweet to the Creature, but suffering is more lovely to the Creator; and so I sind enjoyment of the Miseries of my Banishment.

When a Soul has no mind to fuffer in this World, the has no mind to belong to God: For seeing in this exile, we cannot be his by enjoyment, or but very little, and being not willing to appertain to him by Suffering, we cannot pollels God: And being without God, we adhere to Creatures, and loofe our felves in diforder and vanity. God finds not out of himfelf a more pleasing Mansion, than in a Soul and Body Mortified with Sufferings; there it is he takes his complacency and delight. The Divinity repord with Infinite joy in the Humanity of Jefus Christ in his Suffering state: And a Soul never loves more, nor renders a greater homage to the Divine Perfections, than by the Cross and Sufferings, Sacrificing her felf to Gods Interests and Glory. This then is the Motto of a loving Soul, Aut pati, aut mori, fasus let me suffer, or,

ist is offered

CHAP. II.

That we must have a Love for Croffes.

Life without a Cross, is a Life without Love. This Saying (too common among us)) That we must live an easie Life; does not become the Lips of a Christian. for 'tis all one as to say, We must live a Natural Sordid Life. Next to the Divinity, nothing is more amiable than the Cross of Christ. We must either enjoy with the Divinity, or suffer with the Humanity: and the more we suffer with the one; the more we shall enjoy with the other. A Soul conducted by enjoyments, must also participate of great Sufferings, for these make those more sweet and pleasant.

We find by experience that the least contentment taken in Creatures, does diminish Divine enjoyment; and therefore the Saints have been severe to themselves, so as to allow Nature only what is purely necessary, by a resolute denyal even of Lawful Pleasures. We too often enlarge the Law of necessary, and indulge our selves in our Resections and Recreations, and Accommodations. Nature is content with little; but the clamours of others, and the sear of prejudicing our Health, does us no small hurt in our way towards Persection.

Tie a fign we march couragiously in the way of the Crofs, when we find in our Souls such a Peace and Screnity, that does not indeed hinder

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Nature to feel the bitterness of Sufferings', but inspires with a generous resolution to embrace and cherish them; looking upon them as special favours from Heaven, notwithstanding the regrets of Nature, to prove our Fidelity, and ad-

vance our Glory.

It comes into my mind, that to take away the bitter tast of Croses, we must sweeten them with several Sauces, that is, with different confiderations. Sometimes by accepting from Gods hand with a Spirit of Pennance: Other times with a Spirit of Sacrifice: And then again with the Spirit of pure Love: Sometimes to be conformable to Jesus Christ in his suffering state; and besides to do the Will of God, and submit our selves with all Humility to the Orders of his Divine and Sacred Providence. Thus the Soul may make use of several considerations to sweeten the bitterness of Sufferings; and so preserve a Love of the Cross among all the repugnances of Humane Nature.

When God designs to advance Divine Love in a Sonl, he affords her great occasions of Suffering by the order of his Providence, and she contentedly embraces them, though very bitter to sensual Nature. Such favours are precious, and we ought to manage them with Prudence

and Councel.

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Tis very true what our Blessed Saviour says in the Gospel, Multi sunt vocati, pauci verà electi: Many have calls to Perfection by Inspirations, Lights and Motions of Grace. And yet they arrive not to it, for want of Fidelity, and overmuch sparing themselves by too tender a love in much sparing themselves by too tender a love.

Christian. 343 of their Body, Goods, Friends and Relations, giving an ear more to Humane reason, than the voice of Grace.

Sometimes we perswade our selves that Devotion is a Life sull of Peace without Cross; but we deceive our selves; nor ought we to enter into the Service of God, without a disposition of Indisferency to all states; to be mortised there, not as we would have it, but after what manner best pleases God, Crosses from the immediate hand of God do much conduce to Sanctisse us; but what arise from our vanity, or too much love of the World, are for the most part unprofitable, and rather a hindrance to the Soul in her way to Persection. Suffer we must, more or less, and what pleases God we must

accept of with contentation.

O how rare is it to find Souls truly amorous of Croffes? I am of Opinion that the little love we have for Sufferings, is the only cause we so little advance in the ways of Grace; and if we well examine our felves, we shall acknowledge it. The love of Sufferings is quite repugnant to our Natural Inclinations, but God can make that easie by Grace, which is impossible to Nature; and if we ask this great Grace as we ought, we shall receive it as God has promised. Neither does the Love of the Crofs fo much confift in great Corporal Aufterities, as embracing with an amorous generofity all those little Contradictions, Mortifications, and Humiliations we dayly meet withall, either from others, or our selves, or by the secret orders of Divine Providence; and to make good use of them for our

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our Spiritual advantage, is not the work of Nature, but of Grace.

The more perfect our Virtue is, the more we have a love for the Croft, that we may be more conformable to our Bleffed Saviour: Know we not, that they who will live Picutly in Christ Jesus, must suffer Perfecution? They shall suffer indeed on all sides, from the Eless, from the Spirit, from the World; and God himself will try them with Assistance. This on earth is the high way to Heaven, wherein Love must walk to come to Perfection; which can never be gain'd without a laborious and couragious resolution.

CHAP. III.

That we must have a great Love for Crosses.

VI Emust have a great Intellectual thirst to fusier all forts of Cnosses. This is the Character of true Christians, this is the Mark to know that Jelus Crucified is established in us. And this thirst ought to continue in us, whatever our condition be, because it much augments our Enjoyments and Consolations. The more the Soul enjoyes, the more she becomes thirsty, not only of a more Savorous Union, but also of a more heavy Cross.

Jesus Christ did thirst after his Passion for us, and Dying on the Cross his thirst increased, being not quenched with all his Sufferings. We say we ought to have the Image of Jesus Christ

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Lib. 6. Crucified imprinted on our Souls; and what is this but to have a thirst for Sufferings as he had? O how the cup of affliction is pleafant to a Soul athirst for Sufferings? When fome great Cross happens to fuch a Soul, the finds comfort and latislaction therein, as one enflamed with hear.

is refresh'd with Drinking.

God has a ffrange thirst for our Sufferings, he is a thirk in us by the Fire of his Divine Love. wherewith he loves himfelf and his Divine Perfections; why do we not refresh him with our Sufferings? But alas! this Divine thirst is little known to men, O how is it hidden from fenfual eyes? O Jefus, how little are you known! How little are you loved! These Proceeding of Jesus are not understood by those who only follow the Light of Sense and Reason. Emitte Incem raam Whence once the Spiritual man difcovers this, nothing is more defirable to him then

Suffering.

The great delire of the Bleffed in Heaven is Enjoyment; but we Travellers on earth ought to defire nothing more then to fuffer for Jefus. This Suffering does mortifie Old Adamin us by Holy Violence, makes us die to the World, and Teparates from us whatever is Impure and Earthy, as Gold is purified in a burning Furnace. Our Corruption cannot be ruin'd bur either by Fire or the Sword of Afflictions; which should induce us to embrace them with Contentment, feeing the more we Suffer, the more we are Purified. Let us have an Honourable efteem for the greatest Cross; because they work in us the profoundest Purity, and the purest Love

346 The Interiour Lib.5. of God, which is the Life of our Soul, and the end of our Creation.

I am much pleas'd with my present state of affliction, feeing it is the readiest way to form Jesus Christ in me, and make me a Perfect Chriftian; which is the work of works, the highest Honour, the richest Treasure, and the Soveraign Happiness of this Lite. While we are Pilgrims on Earth, we are exiles from Gods pre-Which must needs be a Cross to Souls Schoe. that figh after the Beatifical Vision. I know not how it is, but methinks, I fee more Purity of Love, of refignation, of Perfection in my present Suffering condition, then what I have found in the joyes of union, which puts my heart in repose and quiet. It seems to me that I can say more truely than at other times, O my God, what do I defire in Heaven or on Earth but you, who are my Portion, and my Heritage for ever? My Life is Crucified with Jesus Christ, and altogether hid with him in the good Pleasure of God.

To fend us Crosses, and make us content with a Suffering condition, is one of the choicest effects of the Providence of God. Seeing he has an Infinite Love for himself, his will is, that all Creatures capable of his Love, should love him also. To dispose them thereto the better, he sends them Crosses, which purific our corrupted Nature, and produce in us dispositions sit for Divine Impressions.

O Infinite Goodness, O merciful Justice, I return you Thanks with all my Heart, that you have afflicted me, to make me love you. Losses,

Lib. 6. Christian. Contempts, Poverty, Sufferings, come, you are welcome, my heart is open to give you entertainment, Behold, I receive you with open arms, because you bring with you Divine

CHAP. IV.

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God is pleas'd to send us Crosses in the place of Persecutions, that our Life may be a continual Martyrdom.

Am much taken with this Saying of St. Clement of Alexandria; That feeing our Love and Fidelity to God does not at present appear by shedding our Blood for our Faith, the Persecutions of Tyrants being ceas'd, we must now manifest them by making our Faith visible in all our Actions. To do the will of God is a great testimony of our Love to him; but 'tis a far greater to suffer for him. Souls loving God, and beloved of him, are careful to correspond to Divine Graces, whether by ading or Suffering; and are so couragious in their Resolutions, that no humane fears, though of loss of Life it self, is able to stop the torrent of their Affections. Witness that good Religious man, who askt his Spiritual Guide, whether it was not better to die, than complain of the Infirmarian, who provided Diet not proper for him.

We now fuffer more notably in some things, than the Martyrs of Old by Bloody Persecutors. For our Croffes Interiour or Exteriour, being impreffions

The Interiour 348 Lib.6. pressions of the Divine Holines, though they separate not the Soul from the Body, yet they separate the Soul from the Love of all Creatures, to unite us to God alone. This Holine's of God having an Infinite abhorrence of whatfoever is not Pure and Holy, Delights to purific the Elect by Tribulations as Gold in the Fire. When therefore the Soul feels her felf as it were nail'd to the Cross, by Derelictions, Aridities, and Interiour Sufferings, let her not strive to free her felf, but continue in this Suffering contentedly, as long as pleases God, because hereby the Glorifies him, and Purifies her felf.

Seeing 'tis certain that the Gross is the Source of Graces and Purity, we are inconsiderate to complain, and shun Assistance, for we see from our advancement in Spirituality, and the Purity of Love; neither will we permit God to accomplish in us his good pleasure. To die naked on the Cross is the ultimate disposition of pure Love, 'Tis in vain to pretend to the Persection of Divine Love, unless with St. Teresa, We defire either to die, or suffer. The Holy Martyrs could not attain it but by dying for God, nor

we except by Suffering for him

When I am in Prayer in the Presence of God, I am much ashamed of my self, to suffer so little, and with so much Impersection, in a manner so different from the Saints. I am in such consussion hereat, that I dare hardly stay in Gods Presence, were it not, that to repair my Miseries, and make him satisfaction, I offer up to him Jesus suffering, poor and abject for us sinners. And thereupon I make resolutions to en-

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Christian. Lib. 6.

dure whatfoever Groffes happen to me with all the Fidelity that Grace requires. It feems to me that a Soul can hardly be content without forme Suffering or other. I have had experience hereof in some little tempest that now is over. And which is more, I cannot believe fo much content may be taken in limiting our sufferings, as defiring greater, if God thinks good; because the Peace and Content of the Soul confifts in Loving, and Love is best satisfied with what most pleases God, and therefore in suffering for him:

From these words of our Blessed Saviour, If any one will come after me, be must deny bimfelf, and take up his Cross, and follow me: I learn that the stare of this present corrupt Life requires that we must live in a continual dying to the World, feeing the enjoyment of Creatures does too much work upon our weakness, to bring us off from God. Our Corruption and the long habit of taking Pleasure in the things of this World, makes it very difficult for us to live this dying Life, which is a great Crofs, and a long

Martyrdom.

It cannot be denyed but we must suffer much to arrive to the possession of God in a Supernatural Life; however to tafte the sweetness of God for one moment, does Infinitely transcend the pains of gaining him. And when he hides himself, and tryes us with Derelictions, what a Crossia it ? 'Tis a state of great Perfection indeed to be content without Comforts, both Divine and Humane. Many Martyrs have suffered less in dying for God, then the Soul does fometimes in this condition. Patience a little,

and.

and God e'er long will sufficiently recompense us with abundance of his Graces and Consolations.

Sometimes God feems to abandon his most Faithful Servants, as he dealt with Holy Job, permitting Satan to assault them with several Temptations; sometimes against Chastity, and sometimes against Faith. 'Tis true, these are Crosses and Cruel Persecutions, but if we bear them Faithfully with Love, 'tis a Martyrdom pleasing to God, and profitable to us. The Persecuting Tyrants tempted the Primitive Christians, sometimes against their Faith, sometimes against their Chastity, which were Glorious Tryals of their Fidelity. O how Blessed a thing is it to sight for that Faith and Fidelity we owe to God? O what lovely Charms are there in this Martyrdom, to those who behold them with the eye of Faith?

CHAP. V.

of, marion arrest difficult for us to live the

Of Exteriour Crosses by the loss of Goods.

Being in a Friends House who served God truly, news was brought me, that the Soldiers had ceas'd upon all my Goodsat home; and Blessed be God, it little troubled me. But rather Irejoyc'd, and put my self into the Hands of God, to do what he pleas'd with me, preparing my Heart to undergo greater Losses contentedly. I was much comforted by my Friend,

and

Christian. Lib. 6.

and I went home full of Joy and Cheerfulnes, accounting my felf Happy that Divine Providence had brought me to Poverty and Abjection. And I faid with my felf : Courage my Soul, our Bleffed saviour continues his Mercies; Poverty and Abjection will afford us wings to flee to Perfection: Behold now is the opportunity to make great Progress in Virtue, if we be

but Faithful.

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It feem'd to me that at this time few Persons pityed me; and yet they talk'd of my Affliction as no ordinary Tryal. They blam'd me in some fort of Proceedings; and after all I found my self an Abject and little considered. I could never consent to the Councel of those, who would have me either yield to anger, or difcontent: For I always thought, I ought not to part with that Meekness and Humility which becomes a Christian, for the greatest Temporal

los that can happen to me.

I considered with my self that these little Crosses were hardly to be named with those that they fuffer, who are tormented with anguishes of Spirit, or those who are Slaves under the Turk, or fuch who are put to Death with grievous Tortures. That which I fulfer is nothing in comparison of those poor Creatures. For I, inflead of being contriftated by Suffering, found a certain joy to possess my heart, and a greater desire to suffer more. Hereupon one told me, That our Saviour sent me Crosses adorn'd with Flowers; which, though they took not away their heaviness, yet their Odours did refresh and ftrengthen me to bear them.

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This Persecution continuing, I found my self always disposed to suffer it with great Interiour Peace; and I kept my Soul from harbouring any thoughts of Bitterness against those who affisted my Plunderers. I Saluted them with a Cordial Love, although Nature had a repugnance to their Proceedings. I beheld with contentment the Fall of our Family, how our Friends did forsake us, and some treat us very unworthily; and yet I could not think it a missortune, but a signal fayour from the hand of Providence. And I did not complain, but digest all this bitter Cup with Interiour joy.

O bona crux! O good Cros! The words of St. Andrew seem'd to me very true. O how Crosses are good, though full of Bitterness? We ought to love what is good, and make much of it: In reality, there's an exquisite goodness in Sufferings, and the Fruit of the Cross is wonderful Savorous. For at last we shall find that the degrees of Glory, shall be according to the measure of our Sufferings and degrees of Love.

I was then told some means how to get out of this Suffering condition; Nature began to resent this with some joy, but Grace represed it, stifling this emotion of Nature, that I might have no joy but in God alone, and in the accomplishment of his good Pleasure.

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Dispositions during Sickness, where the Body suffer'd and the Soul rejoyced.

Odhas been pleas'd to make me enjoy, du-I ring my Sickness, an Interiour Peace fo profound and great, that I was altogether aftonish'dat it, confidering my Miferies and former Transgressions. I said within my self: What is this that I find within me? How comes it to pass that so miserable a Creature should be thus content and fatisfied? For my Soul was in a perfect calm from all her Passions, feeling nothing but a pure and total union to the good pleafure of God, and an absolute abandon of my felf to the conduct of Divine Love.

It feemed to me that fome dayes before this Sickness, I was in a disposition of extraordinary Peace and Tranquility; and one day after Dinner I was taken with a continual Feaver, accompanied with much Head ach, and Pains throughout all my Body. But Divine Love, methoughts, continued his operations, and fet me all a flame with Holy Fires. So that I o. on, cryed out; O Love! O Love! O Love! And

could fay nothing elfe.

When I feem'd as a dying man, my Friends weeping about me, and every one faying, I could hardly Recover; my Soul beheld all this without being touched with any Sentiments of regret, or tenderness for my Friends, being wholly

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The Interiour Lib.6. 354 wholly taken up with Divine Love, which did so entirely unite me to the good Pleasure of God, that methought I could never be seperated from it.

Twas no part of my care to beg for my Life; and one of my Friends propoling to fend me fome Reliques of Saints, which had done Miraculous Cures, I only thank'd him; for though I have no small veneration for them, yet I had no mind to make use of them for my Recovery; but I would wholly put my felf into the hands of Divine Love, and leaving my felf entirely to the conduct thereof, whether for Life or Death, for Time, or Eternity.

In this extreme weakness of Body, my Soul found her self Victorious and Triumphant; to fee that fall of Pain, and her felf full of Love; and instead of being compassionate, seem'd to me to fmile at these Sufferings. This was an extraordinary effect of Love, that in this great weakness of Body, my Soul kept up her strength, and especially that the great Pains of my Head

did not hinder her Interiour occupations. This disposition of Love continued as long as my Sickness; and I entertain'd my Friends with little confideration, and I believe with too much talking, fearing now to have discover'd then too much those Holy Fires that inflam'd my heart, and that Self-love made me declare too freely my inward feelings. My thoughts now make me suspect this defect, but being inebriated with Love, I said I know not what; being like a drunken man, that for a time forgets his Poverty and Miseries. So in this disposition I willow

forgot

Lib.6. Christian. 355 forgot my Sins and extreme Frailties, and cast

my self into the Arms of Love, that I might be united with my Well-beloved, and enjoy his Reciprocal embraces. I had a care to examine my conscience, and consess my sins as a dying man, and set in order my Temporal

Affairs, to pals to Eternity.

Finding my felf not able to give much to the Poor, it was a joy to me to die in Poverty; and I was as well content to give nothing, as if I had been able to bestow much on pious uses. The love of Jesus, poor and despised did deeply pierce my heart, and to fatisfie my felf therein, I made them bring to me a poor Infant, in whom methought I faw the Poverty of little Jesus, and kissing his Hand, I rendred what homage I could, defiring to love poor Jesus to my last breath. I acknowledge dear Jesus, that I am very unworthy of your Divine states. But alas! must I die without entring effectually into the Poverty and Abjection of your Mortal Life? At least, O good Jesus, I die with that Love and Respect I ought to have for them; and be pleas'd to accept of that Conformity I defire to have for them.

I remember that Praying on Sunday in the Evening, the day before I fell Sick, at the Carmes Church, where I was at Vespers, our Blessed Saviour put these words in o my mind, Christo confixus sum Cruci, I am sastned to Christ on the Cross. Whereupon I felt an ardent desire to have not one moment of my Life without being able to say, I am Crucissed with I sus Christ, I think this Divine Love did then discounted the same content of the content of the content of the christ, I think this Divine Love did then discounted the content of the content

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pose me to be nailed on the Cross. And in effect, my Sickness beginning with a grievous Headach, which made my eyes to be swoln with pain, it came into my mind, that I might on this occasion Honour the crowning of our Saviour with Thorns. And it was some Contentment to me to have any conformity to this dolorous state of Jesus. And as my pain did extend to all parts of my Body, I imagin'd it had some little resemblance to the state of a Body Crucified.

Thus you have an account of my dispositions in this Sickness, which I have done in obedience to the command imposed on me. Perhaps they are explicated with too much advantage, but the relation is true as to the substance.

Bless therefore with me the God of Mercies, who has been pleas'd to be so bountiful to his most ungrateful Creature; but it be-seem'd his Goodness to glorisie his Mercies by the greatness of my Miseries. This then is my comfort, and I cannot but declare his bounties to me, and say, Venite, & videte omnes qui timetis Deum, quanta fecit Dominus anima mea. Come all ye that fear God and see what great things she hath done for my Soul.

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CHAP. VII.

Other Dispositions in the time of Sickness, where both Body and Soul are on the Cross.

Began to go out of that state, wherein I had been more than five Weeks. My corruptible Body did bring down the Soul as it were to nothing; so that I had much ado, either to know or love God; of whom, methought, my Soul had little or no remembrance. Seeing my self in this state of Incapacity, I remain d without any other prospect but of my own nothing, and depth of my Miseries; being amazed at the strange weakness of a Soul, when left to her self. This thought which wholly took up my Soul, proceeded from a certain experience, rather than any Light in the understanding.

Till God brought my Soul to this point, she did not well know her own weakness; but now she discover'd a thousand false Opinions and vain esteems she had of her fels, of her Lights, Sentiments and Devotions. She saw now she had some secret relyance on something besides God, which she did not perceive till this state

of privation.

What thus passed in me were the essects of a Natural Malady, which nevertheless brought me to nothing, and much humbled me. For I was in so great a forgetfulness of God, that you may be assonished at it; and I would have hardly

358 The Interiour Lib.6.

ly believ'd, that a Soul having received so many

fensible testimonies of the Love of God, could ever have so long a privation of actual Love, by reason of her former negligence and Inside-

lity.

What vast difference is there between my former and this Sickness? In that my Soul was all inflamed with Divine Love, luminous, vigorous, far above any disturbance from the Body. In this she was cold and dark, yea darknessit self, feeble, infirm, depress'd and over-

burden'd with mortal flesh.

We discover our Nothing and Frailties in Prayer, but the Lights and Gusts that we receive therein hinder us from being sensible of them; what makes us feel them to the quick, must be some extraordinary affliction. It seem'd to me that nothing was then prevalent in me but Sentiments of Impatience, and inclinations to Peevishness; but by the Grace of God I did not always consent to them, though they often molested me.

I was somewhat encouraged by the Relation of the Happy Death of two Fathers of the Society, who ended their days in the exercises of Charity, after they had affished the Souldiers many years, attending them in their Maladies and dolorous Necessities, to help them to live well, and die Happily. At last they died of the Plague; and desiring passionately to suffer, one of them gave great Stroaks with his Fist upon his Soar, to endure something more for Jesu Christ, whom they both lov'd with most ardent Affections. Tis said our Blessed Saviour appear d

Lib. 6. Christian. 359 appear'd to them at the point of Death, to Crown them and make them Happy with his Presence; after which they died Smiling, full of Joy and Consolations.

This did much comfort me, extremely rejoycing at their Happiness; in that they died in the Service of the Hospital for Souldiers, after they had continually endanger'd their Lives, by exposing them to the Mouths of Musquets and Canons, and a thousand Incommodities of Soul and Body, by the cares and solicitudes incumbent on them. O how glorious was their Death? O the amiable Sufferings that brought them to it? What are my little Sufferings in comparison of these? What a shame is it for me to feel so much repugnance to endure them?

Alas! I consider that there's not a day in the year, wherein the Church does not make particular Commemoration of many Martyrs, who have had the zeal and courage to give up their Lives for Jesus Christ, who died for them, that they might Honour his Sufferings by the Torments they endured for his sake. Some have been expos'd to be devour'd by Beasts, others broke upon the Wheel, others burned Alive, others nailed to Crosses, and all have been Miraculous, by embracing with joy and cheerfulness the cruellest of Deaths that most barbarous Tyrants could invent to make them miserable.

O good Jesus, I see all these go by the way of the Cross to come to the Persection of Divine Love; and I stay behind as one abandon'd and unworthy to suffer for you. What can I then do, O blessed Saviour? For you have said,

That

The Interiour Lib.6.
That he who will not take up his Cross, to follow you, is not worthy to be your Disciple. O Love, Crucifie me, Burn me, Martyr me, Si non per Martyrium carnis, saltem per incendium cordis, It not by Sacrificing my Body, yet by Sacrificing my Heart. And let my aftectionate desire to suffer, make my Life and Martyrdom end both together.

CHAP. VIII.

The Interiour Crosses of the Soul in Ob-

at all bis amantine and We to look a Your He Soul in the state of obscurity hardly knows her felf, the is to chang'd from what the was: For in the state of enjoyment, the Inferiour part of the Soul with all her repugnance to Sufférings is quite lost in her prefent Delights; fo that the Soul feels no pain at all, nothing hinders her repose, she taste nothing but fweetness, and has no Sentiments unless of Peace and Tranquility. But on the contrary in the state of Interiour Suffering, the supreme part of the Soul is as it were absorped in the repugnances and difgusts of Nature: Her lights are so surrounded with Darkness, that the is left in obscurity, and all her joy is taken from her. and the sel F And

Although the may be very well refigned, the imagines the is not; for her intellectual conformity is clouded from her: But the has always before her eyes the revolts of Nature, and the

contradictions the finds to Gods good pleafure; and in a manner believing the has no intellectual Refignation, the becomes doubtful of her condition; whereby the is much terrified and plung'd in a Sea of bitterness:

A Soul in this state of Miseries is well pleafing to God, but the not knowing it, remains full of Doubts and Sadness. Yet if you ask this Soul, if the be refigned to the will of God, the will readily reply; Yes, and that the had rather dye than not will what pleases God. However this act of Refignation does not free her from her Fears, because the wills this in a manner without knowing it is her Will. Our Bleffed Saviour, by an admirable defign of Providence, to purify this Soul the more by her Sufferings, hinders her reflection on this act of Conformity and Refignation; fo that the receives no Comfort by this Conformity, being in the dark, and yet is not altogether left in desolation. But in this state she is pleafing to God, though the be much displeased with her felf

Obscurity is more faithful to God, than in abundance of Illuminations. To be thus in the midst of thick Darkness, and believe the Persections of the Divinity, and the Mysteries of our holy Faith, as firmly as if they were clear'd up unto us by the greatest Lights and Illustrations, do testify an extraordinary Fidelity in the Soul to God, and an annihilation of our Judgment, and a high esteem of Gods Veracity. What wonder is it to see

Lib. 6.

God and his Grandeurs in abundance of Light? But to do this when the Soul is in Darkness, this is admirable. Happy are those Souls whom God conducts in this way, let them not complain of their Privations, seeing this is to the end they may more glorify God, and best tensify their Fidelity

O my Soul, let us be in an indifferency for any Condition, for a state of Light or Darkness. Benedicite lux & tenebra Domino. And if Divine Providence tryes us with Obscurity, let us be comforted, and believe that God deals well with us, esteeming this privation

as a favour from heaven,

I confess it is a difficult matter to be as well satisfied in Darkness, as in the Splendours of Paradice. But it we make serious restection, that the Perfection of Christianity consists in a life of Privation and Poverty of Spirit, it will be no matter of Admiration. Behold S. John; lives he not in a Desert, deprived of all things! his Delights are Austerities, Hunger, Poverty, to be unknown to the world, and to lose his Life by the hand of the Hang-man. And which is more, he was deprived of the Conversation of Jesus Christ:

One of the greatest interiour crosses is to lose the sight of our Eyes: nevertheless there's something in this Cross that makes it lovely, in that it puts us in a more absolute dependance on God I have a devotion to be in the Spiritual Life, what a blind man is in the Corporal. He goes and comes, he talks to his friends, he does his little affairs, he eats

Christian.

and drinks; and all this without feeing his way, or his friends, or the rooms, or Heaven, or Earth; only he gives himself up to the guidance of his Conductor. Tis true to do all these actions of our civil life in this fort is not fo pleafing, but they are as really done as, in

the Light.

So a Soul that is without light, does the actions of a Spiritual Life, not so pleasantly indeed, but yet truly and perfectly; feeing the performs them in the annihilation of her lights and proper fatisfaction. It feems to me that a Soul ought not to complain fo much of the Lingrings of this our Pilgrimage, where we live in the obscurity of Faith; and not so earneftly defire the diffolution of this mortal body, under pretence to see clearly, and be united perfectly to the King of Glory. For really I fear these complaints are not so innocent as we imagine; seeing they may proceed from a disgust of Sufferings in a state of Privation; and fo we are more concerned for our own fatisfaction, than content with the good pleafure of God. Sock percome a Capital Llanden

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CHAP.

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Of the beariness of interiour Crosses.

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OD sometimes treats a Soul in a manhis prefence, and depriving her of all enjoyments, for more or less time, as he thinks Refignation to Gods will, is to practife pure virtue, and those souls must be very faithful

that are capable thereof.

The Soul in enjoym nts, is, as if the was glorified; she feels no trouble, her Passions neither disturb her Peace, nor darken her Lights, the is full of contentment delighting in God; the Creatures do not divert her from the Creator; And if at any time they feem to flop her course, the presently doubles her paces to haften after her Well-beloved, being a tracted with the odours of his Perfumes.

But in the state of Interiour Suffering, the Soul becomes a Captive loaden with Irons, buffeted with Temptations, disturb'd with rebellious Passions, lost in extravagant Thoughts, so that she cannot draw near to God, but like a poor Criminal lying in a dark dungeon, is left to her self without any sensible Relief. This is her sad conditition in this miserable Captivity, without either Divine or Humane Confolations, the influences of Feavenbeing withheld from her, and the refreshments of Earth

Christian Libs 6. Earth deny'd her, crucified between them both without help from either.

In this state the Soul is in continual fears of offending God, and falling from her Spiritual Exercises: that she seeks Comforts from Creatures, and is fo injurious to her Divine Center, from whom only the ought to receive Repose and Contentment. However the may much honour God by these interiour Suffer-ings, if she thereby does homage to the dere-liction of the Son of God, in his Torments on

the Crofs.

The eminency of a supernatural Life finds matter of Practice in all forts of Sufferings, interiour or exteriour; but methinks the Soul can never be so compleat a Sacrifice as on the Altar of interiour Crosses; whether they come from the immediate hand of God, from others, or our selves: It matters not much who makes the Cross on which we suffer, be they friends or enemies. God or our selves; if we do but suffer tis sufficient; and we ought to be joyful, or at least content to see our selves crucified some way or other. And as long as we live Exiles here, we thall hardly be without fome Croffes.

A Soul that hath once tafted the sweetness of God, finds it a cross to be taken up too much with worldly business; yea even to satisfy necessities becomes troublesome to her. She finds a cross when she is put to appeale the sedition of her Passions, when she perceives the eyes of Contemplation darkned by her Imperfections, when the is over-burden'd with the weight

Lib.6.

weight of her mortal body tending to corruption: all these mileries are crosses to her, hindring her enjoyments of God. But a faithful Soul to accomplish the will of God, does

bear them couragiously.

It much concerns us to desire of God a particular Light and Grace, to see the beauty of the Cros, that we may love to suffer. We complain of the miseries of this life, and the rigours of our banishment, because we discern not that secret virtue which Privations and Crosses have to unite us to God. It is great and powerful, though little known, and less sought after, by reason it is not so sweet and pleasant as that force which ceases our Spirits in the Lights of enjoyment: But it suffices me, my God, that I am united to you, I desire not the pleasing Sentiments of Union, because Purity there is not so eminent.

Purity there is not so eminent.

The Mercy of God does triumph in the state of Light and Sweetness, and this is the time to glorisie his Goodness. The Justice of God appears more visible in the state of Obscurity and Susterings, and this is the time to magnify his Greatness. And what contentment is it to a Soul to know, that let her condition be what it will, the Divine Persections

may be glorified by her!

When God in a manner leaves us to our felves, our weakness appears so great, that the least stroke of Adversity quite casts us down: at other times when we are supported by the Almighty, an Army in battle aray can never daunt us. Let us follow the conduct

duct of Grace, when the invites us to reflect on fuch like dispositions; for the Soul will thereby know her extreme dependance upon God, and her own infinite frailty, her confidence in God will be re-doubled, and her diffidence in her felf will be augmented; and she will know by experience, that God mortifies and quickens when he pleases, and that he is

our only Supporter.

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To be then in continual union with God, the Soul must necessarily have a perfect indifferency to every flate, and a resolute will to be wholly for God. Illustrations indeed make the Soul more attentive, but not more united : for a loving Soul in Sufferings adheres to God more closely than in the greatest Lights of Prayer. Let us not then measure the Union by Enjoyment but by Suffering; for the more the Soul fuffers for God, the more intimately is the united to him This is one of the Excellencies of the Supernatural Life, and the only thing that can prevail with us to make Crosses, the heavier they are, to be the more acceptable.

I know a Soul that fuffers extraordinary pains of all forts, but 'tis with aridity of Spirit; feeing only the Wil of God therein, without discovering the Beauty of Sufferings, unless when they have left her, God being not willing the thould receive Confolations from fuch a fight, which might much diminish the Purity of her Love.

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CHAP. X.

The great Fruit we may reap from Interiour Crosses.

Thought that on this day of particular Devotion, I should have been all on a slame with Divine Love: But I have been in a manneral-ways distracted in my Prayers, though I had my Book in my hand, my Spirit not being in a temper for Interiour Exercises. To speak Truth, I found my self much chang'd, it pleasing God, that having not corresponded to my state of Light and sweetness, his Justice should put me into this rigour and obscurity, and blessed be his Name for evermore.

What augments my forrow, is, that I have not been Faithful to many opportunities of practifing great Virtues. At other times I have found all things helping me towards God, now every thing diverts me, infomuch that the fire of Love is in a manner wholly extinguished with the waves of Temptations. Methinks I find my self in an abandonment so great, as if I ne-

ver enjoyed confolations.

Being to begin any good work, I feel a tepidity and repugnance to it. The very, thoughts of Poverty did horribly afright me; To be defpifed, to want accommodations, to suffer pains, was terrible unto me. It increas'd this bitterness, in that the Servants of God did not comfort me as formerly; so that it must go very ill with me, if some powerful hand come not into with my fuecour. And what makes my condition more deplorable, is that I am so sensible of the privation of earthly things: For if it was the want of Gods presence and his Graces that did iastict me, that methinks would afford some consolation. I now in a manner make no frayer, that is, my Prayer is as good as nothing: I am full of Distractions when I Communicate: I am apt to fall into passion on every occasion; the least thing does much troubleme. This day I had some good Intervals, during which I was taken up with these thoughts.

What is man, O my God, when you cease to visit him? How great is his Poverty, his Wants, and his Miseries? I should never have believed it, if I had not known it by experience in this small time that you have left me to my felf. O my Soul, how great is thy weakness? How profound is thy own nothing, and almost incredible? Lay it up well now in thy memory,

and never forget it.

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What can I do, O my God, without you? My Spirit is nothing but a dark Dungeon, and my heart is a recepticle of all forts of evil Sentiments and extravagant Thoughts: No inclinations to good, but strong efforts to that which is evil. Alas! 'ris now I find by experience the absolute dependance I have upon you, more than a shaddow on the Body, or the Light on the Sun, I was never so annihilated and plunged in my own nothing as now. I can see no stability either in my self or any Creature. The whole World cannot uphold him, whom you have forfaken. O how vain is the consolation of

370 The Interiour Lib.6. of Creatures, when that of the Creator fails us?

Dare I hereafter think my felf worthy of the leaft Sentiments of Grace, that have had the ex. perience of my excessive miseries? Verily, if God should plunge me into Hell, I should not be aftonish'd at it; but rather admire his Mercies for bearing fo long with fo ungrateful a Creature. Neither am I at all amazed at my failings for what wonder is it to fee frailty it felf frail? What most humbles me, is to feel in my felf so great repugnance to suffer so little. What would become of me, if I should be charged together with Interiour and Exteriour Sufferings? O how far am I from the Patience of Saints, and the Love that they have for the greatest Croffes? Humble thy felf, O my Soul, humble thy felf to the very center of thy own nothing.

Bleffed is the man who always fears. God leaves us on purpose in this World without a certainty of our Salvation, fo that no person knowes whether he be worthy of Love or hatred. This uncertainty is a great Cross, and God to try us by Sufferings, permits us now and then to fall into perplexing doubts concerning our Interiour state and dispositions; to which our Spiritual Guides are as lyable as our felves, and therefore cannot give us any Infallible affurance? 'Tis no ordinary perplexity to' travel in a difficult way, without affurance whether we be right or wrong, to come to our journey's end. To doubt whether we be deceived by the shadows of our ignorance, rather than conducted by the Light of Grace, is

Lib. 6. Christian. 271
one of the heaviest Crosses of a Spiritual Life:
But'tis also most conducing to purishe the Soul,
and make her die to her own Interest and Abilities; that in the midst of all her troubles she
may cast her self wholly upon God, and absolutely abandon her self to his Protection.

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CHAP. XI.

That we must bear Patiently our Imperfections.

Onferring about Patience with some Servants of God, we concluded that a Soul ought not only apply her felf to bear with the Imperfections of others, but more especially herown. For after our failings, we must not with an imperuous Soilicitude fearch after the means to Cure an Evil, that oftentimes difpleases us rather for our own Interest, than the Interest of God. Nor is it prudential, while we are in a heat, to refolve fuddenly to make fo many Examens, Meditations, and undergo fo many Austerities; but principally we must have an eye to God and his Glory, and make an act of Contrition, to repair the injury we have done him by our fault: And then practice Patience, whereby we shall bear with Peace and Tranquility the fight of our Misery, which too often makes us fad and anx ous. But this proceeds from want of Love for Abjection; for who foever can be content to be abject, shall never be disquieted, but will enjoy a profound Min was about Peace

Peace in the greatest Humiliations. Dison less quia mitis sum & bumilis corde, & invenion

reguiem animabus veftris.

We must not then spend our time unprosit.

ably after our failings, as we too often do: But continuing in Peace of mind, and being hum. bled for our detects, we shall be better disposed to return to union with God, where is the practice of Virtue, without being too much dejected. In this state let us say with a full considerate in Gods Mercies, Cor Contritum & Humble Heart, O God, thou wilt not despite. For he that is contrite because he has offended his Heavenly Father, and truly humbled for his Unworthiness, cannot but be Gracious in Gods sight.

This well understood, and faithfully practised, leaves the Soul in great Peace, makes her Humble and Patient to bear all defects with meckness and compassion. But because we are those sensible of our own Failings, than those of others, we have need of more Patience on

our own behalf.

Tis an effect of pure Love to make the Soul displeas d with our Imperfections and Failings, without being disquieted at the Humiliation and Confusion that attend them. We ought indeed to afflict our felves for offending God, but re-hovee that we are asham'd we have offended him; for this plucks down our Pride, and re-pairs the injury done to the Divine Majesty. But if we refuse to acknowledge our Failings, we are so much the more miserable, in that we will not confess our misery.

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Patience and Longanimity are very necessary for us to go fairly on in the ways of God. Chrifrian Perfection is not the work of a day, we must bear with our Frailties and Imperfections many years. Tis a grofs mistake arising from Self-love, to think to march more speedily in ways of Grace than That enables us to perform. From hence it proceeds that we are less taken up with the thoughts of God, than of our felves We are full of afflictand our own condition. ing apprehensions that what we do in Gods Service is nothing worth that the best things are bad as we use them, Impersection and Misery being our conftant attendants. But this peripetual looking downward on our felves is projudicial to our advancement in Perfection; when we should principally look up to God, and such as we are cast our selves into the Arms of Mesus Christ, having an eye to him, and relying upon him.

When we are refolv'd to take up our thoughts with God, and put our confidence in him, without fo much ruminating on our own Failings, this will not bury them in oblivion, but God will discover them to us in a 'way incomparably better, than what we can know by our own endeavours; for all we can do is nothing in respect of those helps we shall find in him, to advance us in Perfection.

What gain we by thus perpetually picking quarrels with our own felves? After all, we thallnever be without Imperfection. What can we discover in the ground of our Hearts, but that Thornes and Briefs do grow there daily,

with

with a thousand Failings, use what diligence we can to manure and cultivate it? As long as we bottom upon our selves, we languish continually with Impersections. Let us free our selves from our selves as soon as we can; when we have once learn'd to be more careful to please God then our selves, we shall go on much pleasanter in the ways of God, and arrive sooner at the region of Peace and Tranqui-

lity.

Tis the true course of a Super-natural Life to give our selves up to the conduct of Grace; which sometimes puts us to combat with our Passions; at other times tryes us with Interiour and Exteriour Sufferings; sometimes leaves us to discursive Prayer, and then again elevates the Soul on the wings of Contemplation, refreshing her with variety of Spiritual Dainties: Sometimes makes all things easie to us without travel or difficulty; and sometimes to seel a kind of tedious weariness in the ways of God. But in all this the Soul that is abandon'd to the good pleasure of God, keeps her self Peaceable and contented, and indifferent to whatsoever God shall determine of her.

For my part, I too often feel the repugnances of my depraved Nature, but then I endeavour to make this a matter of Humiliation. Tis a great Misery to be always Impersect, and not to be able to cure our Spiritual Maladies: But we must as well practice Patience in these, as in Corporal Insirmities. I have a mind to call my Hermitage the Hospital of the Incurable, and only to lodge with me such poor Spiritual Christian.

flians.

Lib. 6. Christian. 375 stians, who have a good will to heal their Impersections, but yet still fall into relapses. At Paris there's an Hospital for those who are Incurable in Body; But mine shall be for such in Soul.

The end of the Sixth BOOK.

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Interiour Christian.

BOOK VII.

Of Ordinary Prayer and Contemplation.

CHAP. 1.

What Esteem we ought to have for Prayer.

place Perfection where it is not, for this will much retard us in the path of Virtue. We must not therefore have too great an esteem for the Unitive Mystick way; not but that it is good, and very good for a Soul that God conducts to Perfection by such extraordinary Elevations: But we may safely believe the Unitive Practical way to be as excellent and more necessary, seeing 'tis nothing else but the practice of a Christian Life; and the other consists in Elevations and Unions of Spirit with God by Contemplation.

Tis observable that our Blessed Saviour says, Whosever will come after me, must take up his Cross

The Interiour

Lib.7. Cross, and follow me. He says not, he must be Elevated in Prayer, but he must take up his Crofs; that is, he must practice the Maxims of the Gospel. Happy then are those who suffer although they be not elevated in Spirit. And those who are elevated in Spirit, are not happy, but inafmuch as they are conform to Jefus Christ Crucified, and by such Unions are more disposed to the Cross and Sufferings. The Crucified Life is in a manner the end of the Myflick Life, whose Gusts and Lights conduce to fortifie the Soul, to carry her Cross the better.

St. Terefa fays, That 'tis a good fign after a Soul has been in an extasse, if she find in her self extraordinary defires to fuffer, in that she cannot return from those Holy Communications with God but wellinfrucied. For the Perfection of Love here confifts in Suffering for the Love of Jesus, and not enjoying him. Let us not complain then, if webe not elevated by Myffick Unions, but rather rejoyce too fee our poor Soul in Prayer among the Thorns of dryness and aridities, than the Roles of a fweet and guftful Devotion. Interiour as well as Exteriour Sufferings must be pleasing to us, seeing a true Christian ought to Glory in nothing but the Crofs of Christ. But that did extend it felf as well to his Soul as Body; for his Divine Soul was deprived of fensible fuccours in this Dereliction on the Cross, and we must Love to be conform to him, and rest content. Happy are those Souls that love Sufferings rather than Enjoyments; and complain of nothing fooner than not to fuffer.

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A Soul which receives no great Light from God in Prayer, but is left in darkness and Interiour Sufferings, carries in reality a heavy Crofs: But a Soul illuminated in Prayer by illufirations from Heaven, endures another Crofs more intime and burdensom. For this Light discovering to her the great merit of pure Suffering, 'tis a pain to her not to fuffer; and fo the remains without all fort of confolation; feeing the flate of Light and Sweetness appear to her not preferrable to that of obscurity: And so rasting of those Sweets, they are not now so pleafant, having discover'd that the bitterness of Aridities is more acceptable to a Soul, that defires nothing but the pure Love of Jesus Christ Crucified, and that thereby may be more firm-

ly united to her Saviour.

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When I am in Darkness and Aridities, I stand in need of an indifferency in every state, that I may bear with Patience my Abjection and Poverty. I have more need of Indifferency when my Soul is enlightned; which irradiations God vouchfafes us to strengthen our weakness, and not, as I have thought heretofore, to advance us in the practice of Divine Love, which is more eminent in the contrary condition. I have stood in need of comfort in my Sufferings; and I have flood more in need of it in a flate of Joy and Sweetness. I said heretofore when I abounded with Consolations, that I should never suffer again: At present I think I shall suffer as long as I live, feeing I find Croffes in every flate; and I frame my felf to an Indifferency to Gods will and Pleasure in his dealings with me. Heretoforc Bb

The Interiour Lib. 7. fore inebriated with Consolations, I said, Fulcite me floribus, stipate me malis quia amore langues, Surround me with Flowers and Aples to augment my Comforts, and increase my Love: But now I say, surround me with Croses, Contempts and Sufferings, for languishing with Love, I desire to Love Jesus better than ever.

Tis a wonderful thing that I should be more poor now, then when I was deprived of all Consolation. I will not then too greedily seek after Light and Sweetness, seeing methinks they make me poorer. I fland amaz'd to see a Soul to find her felf desolate by Consolation. In Defolations the Inferiour part of the Soul fuffers, but in Confolations the Superiour part, and more elevated, but little known. I perceive that the Supreme part of the Soul cannot be content and comforted but by the Death of the sensual part, and a seperation from all inordinate Affections to the Creature: I should therefore rather define a stare of Desolation, and Fidelity therein, than all the Delicious gufts of Prayer, though so elevated, as to bring the Soul to ravishing extasses.

CHAP. II.

Of the different sorts of Mental Prayer.

I find a comparison which explicates very well the difference of ordinary Prayer and Prayer Passive. A man may see well enough the Furniture of a chamber, and the riches of a Cabinet,

Christian, Lib. 7. by striking Fire and lighting a Candle, to view the particulars: Or by the lighting of the Sun, when we have nothing to do, but to open our eyes to behold those Objects. Meditation much refembles the first way of feeing with a Candle; Perfect Contemplation the second way of seeing by the Sun; because 'tis done not only without labour, but all at once, and with delight. When the Light of the Sunfails us, we must supply is with a Lamp or Candle: When God does not Communicate himself by Contemplation, we must seek after him by Meditation, and be content with Gods Gifts, whatever they be, with

Peace and Humility.

When God withdraws his Passive Light, 'tis in vain to frive to retain it : We must acquies in his Pleasure till it return again as he thinks good. If God please to leave us in darkness, without Sun or Candle, 'tis an opportunity to practice Humility and Patience; for we must defire nothing but God alone, and in what manner he thinks best. Let a Soul be never so perfect, the is never continually elevated to a high degree of Contemplation, but more or less as it pleases God, she must descend to the practice of Virtue, and exercises of Charity, or to discurfive Meditation, by Applications to God in the obscurity of Faith. She must therefore keep her self in an Indifferency, rising and falling according to the conduct of Gods Holy Spirit: Always esteeming her self unworthy of the least Grace, and never pretend by forcing her Spirits to the extraordinary favours of high Contemplation. But when the has a call to fuch Bb 2

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elevations in Prayer, the way to arrive thither is by a perfect death to all things, and a Faithful imication of Jesus Christ in his Crucified states of Abjection and Poverty, with a Love of Solitude, as much as our condition will per-

There's a great deal of difference between that Light and Fervour which is imparted to a Soul in the elevations of passive Prayer, and that Light which is procured by the ordinary Grace of Meditation. That is more intime and piercing, and full of Heavenly Benedictions: This however fuffices to acquire Virtues, and serve God in the state of our Vocation. Tis our duty to attend to our present condition with Peace and Humility, and submission to the Divine Will, and let God alone to order, as he pleases the time of his Visits, and our manner of Prayer. Sometimes this will be by simple Thoughts, fometimes by Discourse, sometimes by Faith alone, and fometimes by passive Illuminations. But whatever is given us, we must receive from the hand of the Divine Goodness with great respect and Thankfulness, acknowledging our selves unworthy of the least good Thought.

That which a Soul ought to do both in, and out of Prayer, is to be very attentive to Gods Holy Inspirations, and follow them, with Courage and Fidelity. If she find that God elevates her to extraordinary Contemplation, let her yield to those Divine impressions: If she be kept in an ordinary way, let her there abide: If she be left in Aridities, let her also sit down

without

Lib. 7. Christian. 283 without complaining. The great secret of a Spiritual Life, is for a Soul to purifie her self, so as to comply with the motions of God, who is our Alpha and Omega, our Origen and final end.

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There are things sufficiently declared, as the Commandments of God and the Church, the Duties we owe to Obedience, Charity, or Necessity. There's no need to expect immediate Light from God for the performance of these things: But only in such which are neither commanded, nor forbidden: And in these great Purity of Soul is necessary to discern the mostions of Grace, for sear we be deceived by our own imaginations.

Those Saints who by the Impulses of Gods Holy Spirit have writ Spiritual Treatifes, to direct Interiour Christians in the wayes of God, oftentimes affect us with their Thoughts and Sentiments, because they Pray in Heaven for this Blessing on their labours on Earth; and therefore tis Beneficial to read their Books to advance our Devotion. But do what we can, we shall never know what that Prayer is by what those Books write of it, unless by the practice and Light of the same Prayer.

We know well enough in general, that Prayer is the fource of all Virtue in the Soul; who leaves that off, falls into Luke-warmness, and Impersections. Prayer is a Holy Fire that warms the Heart and Affections, which without it must of necessity grow cold in Devotion. In Health or Sickness, Joy or Sorrow, we must always Pray, except we have a mind to fall from Grace to our utter ruip.

Bb3 CHAP.

CHAP. III.

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That we ought to be indifferent to what manner of Prayer God is pleased to give us.

ly vitious. The one is to cover more Grace and Perfection than God intends us, fo as to be troubled and difgusted to see others more elevated in Gifts of Prayer than our selves: The other is not to co-operate faithfully with the Grace vouchsafd us, either for want of Courage in the Difficulties that occur in the practice of Virtue; or of Attention to observe the Motions of Grace, or being observed, by too easily diverting our selves to other matters, and so neglecting the Mercies of God.

When a Soul is well purified, and hath experience of the Impulses of Grace in her, and can distinguish them from the motions of Nature, she must give free ingress to the rayes of this Light from Heaven, that she may be throughly illuminated and warm'd in her Devotions. For to do otherwise under a pretence of Humility and scar of deception, is not to yield to the Conduct of God's Spirit, who inspires when, and whom he pleases. Tis then our Duty to be entirely passive, that God may sully work his Will in us.

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When these Divine Illuminations are withdrawn from a Soul, for the Glory of God, and her good, and so left in darkness: or when her own Imperfections have made her not so capable of supernatural Lights: the must rest contented with these privations, till it pleases the Sun of Righteousness to shine upon her. A purified Soul is satisfied and resign'd on such occasions, because God only is her joy, and not his gifts, which he by his infinite Goodness communicates to her when he pleases. And this is the reason that she loves not her inward peace and joy, when the is deprived of heavenly Irradiations and

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He who gives himfelf up to his Prince for his fole interest and fatisfaction, without feeking his own peculiar concerns and contentment, does not much matter what Service he renders, and what Rewards he receives, provided his Prince be well pleased and satisfied. If he keep him near his person, to ceres him, he is content : not that he is carefled, but because it is the Princes pleasure. If he imploy him afar off in troubleforme Affairs, he is content a not to be fo far from his Person, and in a hazardous Employment, but because this is the Pleasure of his Prince, whose Content the only had an eye to, in giving himself up anto his Service. This is the true case of a Soul that defires to ferve God purely for the Love of God. If God care's her in Prayer with Visits full of Sweetness, the is consent, because this is his Pleasure; if he affords not his B 4 2

his Presence but leaves her in Darkness, she is content, because its the good pleasure of God. If God call her to the exercises of Charity in a life more active and laborious than the contemplative, she is content because this is the

good pleasure of God, which is the only thing

the feeks and defires in his Service.

This indifferency disposes a Soul to receive great Graces; for by this means the fometimes arrives to a total oblivion of her felf and all creatures, without any reflection on her own Interests, Temporal or Eternal, haveing nothing in her eye but the good pleasure of God, and desiring him alone: infomuch that if any thing of felf creep in at any time, as soon as the discovers it, 'tis distasteful to her. This is a state of great Nakedness, and entire Mortification, and a perfect disposition to most fublime Prayer; whether God elevates a Soul, whom he fees ready to submit to the least degree of Prayer, or Dereliction, if so he pleases. ... It happens oftentimes that in a frate of Privations, a Soul is to furrounded with darkness, that the fees nothing of God, who feems entirely to be hid from her : and that which augments this Croft, the is so wholly taken up with her Lofs, that Thorhinks not of the means to recover her happiness and to samely and it

If in this state a Soul be content with this rigorous usage, with all humble submission to the good pleasure of God, though she apprehends it not at present, she is united to God in a transcendent manner, and possesses her so veraign Good, when she sears she has lost him.

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This is the preheminence of a Soul, which is not wedded to one manner of Prajer more than another but holds her felf in an indifferency to receive of God whatever he pleafes. And let her Prayer be what it will, the will be furenot to perform the Work of God negliadvance the glory of God; and to surviva Legar and thereupon fail in their correspond-

of boson and in CHAP. IV.

That above all things 'tis necessary to praai fi dife Prayer.

but an airifice of Secan, by other Extension VE must understand aright, that all our Persection, and all the Glory we can bring to God, Ives in our Interiour and not fo much in our Exteriour Actions. Alas! we pass away our time vainly and unprofitably, both to God and our felves. There's nothing fo precious as his Interiour, nothing is to be preferred before it; feeing thereby God is most glorified. And therefore of all our Sacrifices the Heart is the principal, and none of our Offerings are acceptable without it. Fili mi, da mili cor turns. Tis from the Interiour proceeds the pure Love of God, and of our Neighbour, the Purity of Intention, the Zeal of the Glory of God, and whatever Riches the Soul possesses. And yet we too often neglect this, to make a fair outward show in exteriour actions, which are ordinarily fullied with impurity, by a mixture with the Interests of corru--pted Nature dA ni distal no finalisi ni rada ·TUCO

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Too many pass away the greatest part of their Life in Impurity and Imperfections for want of Light: and they want Light, because it is not ordinarily obtained but by Prayer: and they neglect Prayer under specious preten. ces of gaining time, to do good to others, and advance the glory of God; and so want this Light, and thereupon fail in their correspond. ing to the Grace of God. A Soul must be constant to her Times of Prayer, if she intend to nourish the Life of Grace in her, and not to pray only then, when the has nothing elfe to do that is good and commendable : which is but an artifice of Satan, by other Exercises of Charity to withdraw well-meaning Souls from Prayer; and this we must have a great care of, being a subtile Temptation. If hereby he can weaken the vigour of the Soul, 'tis that he lookt for, and then he will foon induce us to fall into fuch Defects and Imperfections, which will bring great Prejudice to a spiritual Life. How many Souls are there, who endanger their Ruine even by Works of Charity, either by over-doing or not doing them according to the order of God and Grace 2000 100 100

We must have a generous Fidelity to the Exercise of holy Prayer, by means whereof we approach to the Divine Source, from whence the Soul receives all Strength and vertue. Prayer is a holy fire to which who drawsmear has warm affections for God; who shans it, must of necessary fall into Tepedity and Lukewarmness. Whatever our condition be, whether in Sickness or Health, in Abjection or Honour. Hour, in Poverty or Abundance, let us never fail of our Duty to God by Prayer, in the best manner we can, being the Powerful means to procure and advance our union with God, our only Happiness. I canot possibly wish a greater Good to any person I love, than the Gift of Prayer; knowing that thereby we enter into the Cabinet of the Secrets of God, and are made partakers of his Graces

Prayer then is the Source of all Grace in the Soul, without which by degrees the tends to ruine. No affairs whatfoever could ever hinder the Saints from their constant Devotions. Jesus Christ himself has shew'd us this by his example, spending whole Nights in Prayer and Contemplation. Our Disorders proceed much by too lightly engaging our selves, for want of Circumspection, in humane affairs, to which we have no Call from God, and therefore are not favoured by him with Success; whereby we fall into many Defects, and become too often indispos'd to Prayer; and Prayer failing us, we want all things.

The first Wheel that must set all a going in our Spiritual Life, is this Maxim, That our perfection consists principally in our Interiour. But it cannot go well with our Interiour without Fidelity to Grace, which works in us a Love of Mortification and Austerities, an Inclination to Solitude, and a kind of Abhorrence of Senfual Pleasures, and such Vanity as the World

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Now this Grace that brings forth these good -Fruits in us, is not obtained but by Prayer, nor ordinarily ordinarily augmented but by Prayer, not well known so as to correspond to its motions but by Prayer. But 'tis very difficult and in a manner impossible to preserve the Spirit of Prayer in the Multiplicity of Affairs, which for the most part are instrumental to divert our Thoughts from God: and so sew Souls attain to Perfection, because few dispose themselves to pure Prayer; neglecting it too much, under a pretence of gaining Time to do good to others.

A Soul that would be wholly for God, must discreetly shun the Obstacles of Perfections, though never so specious with Courage and Fidelity. Who is weak in Prayer, must not lay out himself too much in Action; for then he will profit little in the wayes of God, and his Interiour will not advance in Vertue.

When we see many great Servants of God to do glorious things, for the Love, and Service, and Honour of their great Master, with high Commendation; this sometimes raises an emulation in us to follow their Examples; but our Fidelity does not consist herein, it being our Duty to make the best we can of the Grace we have received, and admire without envy the Gifts of others.

Methinks I have a Desire to be but as God will have me, neither more nor less, either interiourly or exteriourly, in Nature or Grace. I see others Perfect and my self Imperfect without discouragement. I behold even with Content others commanding their Passions, and my self fighting for Victory; others doing much

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much for God, and I in a manner doing nothing; others Strong and Couragious in the Service of God, and my felf nothing but Weak-

ness and Misery.

I am comforted in confidering the Defigns of God concerning me, and acquiesce in his good Pleasure. For God refuses us not sometimes to take unprofitable Servants into his house, who only serve to set forth his Bounty and Magnificence : as we fee with us fome great Persons do show their Grandeurs. When we have nothing to do but only to pray, we feem to some to be but unprofitable, and do God but little or no Service; but I rest contented herein, seeing God hereby does magnify his Goodness and Mercy to me. I doubt not but there are many Souls in Heaven, who have in the eyes of the World done little Service for God; as Solitares in the Deferts, and many Persons without Talents, and yet have high Places in the Mansions of Eternity. They fpent all their Time to purify their Interiour, by being faithful to the Graces they have received from the infinite Bounty of God, and the Service they rendred him, to the Glory of his Name, is only written in his Omniscience; but will be laid open to the World at the great Day of Manifestation,

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CHAP. V.

Of the Impediments of Prayer.

The temporal Affairs of our Oeconomy does not a little take us off from God. We do ill in it; yea, it being our Obligation, 'tis pleafing to God to manage our Temporals with a good Intention: though it would be better, if we can; to lay afide these Worldly Distractions, to spend our time only in God's Service. And those who have a Call from God, to attend on him alone, in a state of Prayer and Contemplation, cannot without being unfaithful to his Grace, continue in the solicitous Distractions of worldly Affairs.

I must needs say that Worldly Business darkens and hinders my Soul in her Spiritual Exercises; and I would never spend time therein upon Humane Considerations, but purely because God has so order dit. However it must be our care not to spend more time therein than necessity requires. Too delicate Dyet; though it may strengthen Nature, yet it weakens Grace. When the Body is brought down by Abstinence, the Soul is more vigorous in her Elevations to God: I find this true in me by

Experience.

A Soul must be very well grounded in Grace, that among temporal Imployments and worldly Cares, can keep her self up in Fervour and Purity

Lib. 7. Purity. She meets with a thousand Occasions to move her to Anger, Impatience, Sadnes. and vain Joy: and though the do not give way to them, yet she is sensible of them, and this must needs more or less disturb her Interiour Peace, whereby the is united to God her Hap-A little thing will hinder a Soul from raifing her felf to Contemplation, and a lefs matter will somewhat darken her when elevated; because the least emotion of Spirit will indispose her to receive Divine Impressions. Therefore a man of Prayer must be a man dead and mortified; for that is not pure Prayer, which does not work in us a victory over our Passions and Vicious Inclinations, and bring us to the practice of all Christian Virtues.

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I fee now more clearly than ever, that the Spirit of Prayer does not persevere and gather strength, but in those who are dead to Sensuality, auftere to themselves, Penitent, and disengaged from whatfoever is not God. 'Tis true, as for Corporal Austerities, a tender Complexion must follow the Councel of a Director: But commonly we are too indulgent to our felves, and far from the practice of great Penitents, who were very fevere to themselves, and also great Contemplatives. We deceive our selves if we think to enter into a state of Prayer, and take delight in Worldly things. Though in rigour this may in some fort be permitted to Candidates of Devotion, yet not to Proficients, in whom the Spirit of Prayer and Conformity to Jesus Christ Crucified ought to be wholly predominant. For 'tis our Duty to live ConThe Interiour Lib.7. Conformably to that state where God has pur

Gerson says very well; If we refuse Exteriour Confolations, we shall receive Interiour. The reafon hereof feems to me to be this, because in teriour Confesations participate of the Purity of their fource, which is the union of God with the Soul, and will not permit any mixture with Impurity and Imperfection. For fenfual love and Consolations are Earthly, Impure, and Imperfect, and confequently are contrary to the Spirit of Grace, which makes the Soul pure and Penitent, and Mortified to the things of this Life. Moreover, Interiour Confolations are flender participations of those Infinite Delights which God has in himself of himself; and he is isalous of fuch favours, not communicating them but to a Soul entirely beloved, that takes no delight but in him alone. But when earthly confolations enter into a Soul, they drawher partly from God, and so God withdraws his favours from her.

For this reason the Saints who would be wholly for God, mortified themselves without reserve, as much as humane weakness would permit; that no sensual or Worldly Pleasures might have any part in their Affections, but God alone. Take courage, O my Soul, let us embrace the Cross, and follow Jesus Christ, who will conduct us through the garden of his Delights Let us not trouble our selves with Worldly Affairs, unless we know tis the Will of God; for otherwise we shall find affliction of Spirit, and decay in Spirituality. Thrice happy is he, who

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who shaps multiplicity infor this will dispose him to pure Love it belief is had no unlocal to a control of the cont

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Many things feem to us necessary, which ferve but to entertain the corruption of Nature, fill working in us. If God fhould feverely examine all our Actions, perhaps he would hardly find one in all respects well pleasing to him. We too much follow Nature, and our Humane Inclinations, if Grace fets us a working, we hardly go through with it, but Nature creeps in some way or other to fully our Actions. What is purely Natural, cannot be Meritorious, all merit proceeding from a Principle of Grace, and therefore no Actions but what have an influence from Grace can dispose us to a union O how rare a thing is pure Virtue! That which seems best, is not for the most part without fome blemift, Those who have Mus frations from Heaven, discover thefe Impunties, others in the dark fee nothing but groffer Faults and Imperfections and attended the avoids

From all this we may conclude, that there are principally four great Obstacles, which hinder for the most part the exercise of Prayer.

1. To engage our selves in Worldly Affairs, more than the order of God requires.

2. To be too deligate, and use very little Corporal Austerity.

To practice little either Interiour or Exteniour Retreats, and to have no Love for Recollection, and for Solitude.

4. Want of zeel and Courage in the ways of God, and so living a Life meerly timmane, by sollowing our Natural Inclinations.

But he shall never be a Man of Prayer, who does not live a Super-natural Life, and practice

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all Christian Virtues with a Faithful and Generou Resolution. And Blessed is he, who by his configurately in Spiritual Exercises has brought his Soul to such a temper, that his in a manner as easie for him to Pray as streath. His recipies Beneficiane make Domino; the Misericondiane, a Decommendation of the Salatari such quite be as seeing for sind, shall enjoy him there, where he can never be sould enjoy him there, where he can never be less.

CHAP. VI.

Of the Means that facilitate the Exercise of

that which feems bell, is not for the most part THologver is resolved to undertake the Vill Exercise of Prayer, must expect to futf rall forts of Temprations from Satan, who above all others, hate the Praying Nation: And no less from Nature, which halh ffrange repugnances to for Crucifying a Life, and fuch Exercises as elevate her above all ther Natural Inclinations: And also from the World, which does not relish at all formuch Solitude and Mortification. But we cannot be true Servants of Jetus Christ Crucified, without taking up out Creft to fallowshim A Poor, Abject, Despited, Suffering Life, contented with pure Necessities for Fend, and Cleathings is a good Disposition to Prayer. Snortanilant lavara Vi van van

chwilbvery much dispose us to this Holy Ex-

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the states of the Suffering Life of Jesus Christ, and in the practice of pure Virtues on all occasions. To esteem the Sacred folly of the Cross the greatest Wisdom, and correspond to the In-2 spirations of Gods Holy Spirit, against all opposition what soever that thwart the Designs of God, and hinders the operations of his Grace in us.

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Tis a great help to Prayer, to make it our fole and only bufiness; and doubtless of high concern, feeing 'tis to do that on Earth, which the Saints do in Heaven, to Contemplate and Love the Beauties of God. However, if we have other Affairs, at least we must make this the principal, to which the rest ought to give place; and not, as alas! too many do, regulate our Devotions by our Secular Affairs. Why should we overcharge our selves with Imployments, by offering our service to others on the pretence of Charity? Martha who was very busie about the Corporal Service of Jesus Christ, was reprov'd for troubling her felf with so many distracting Offices; and her Sister commended for attending to the only thing necellary, the Love of God and Contemplation.

Tis a good help to Prayer, not to engage our selves in Worldly concerns, nor in giving or receiving Visits without necessity, such as the Oblations of Charity, or of our place and condition requires of us. If we be free, to shun all entertainments that are dangerous, or unprofiable, and chuse to converse with such, who commonly discourse about the one thing necessary, which consists in the Service of God,

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The Interiour 398 and the exercise of Prayer. But all this must

be so done, as our Discretion may not be call'd in question, nor Charity wounded

Tis an important help to Prayer, to stand always upon our guard in the time of Sickness, or Indisposition of Health, fo as not wholly to leave off our usual Exercises of Devotion. Under pretence to cherish the Body, we commonly yield too much to Nature, and fo fometimes in a fhort Sickness we look long habits of Mortification, which cost us dear in their acquifition. Prayer is not to be laid afide at fuch a rime, but we must endeavour to keep up our Union with God by Interiour acts of Virtue, which require no ftrength of Body, nor gufts of Devotion, but agree well enough with a flate of Trouble and Dereliction

Tis a very profitable help to Prayer, to accufrom our felves to do nothing of concern withour a motion from God. The Holy Spirit is in us to conduct us, and we may fafely follow fuch a Leader. This keeps the Soul in great Purity, which knows the Infpirations of Grace, by the Internal Peace, Sweetness and Liberty, that always more or less attend them. And if the quit them to follow Nature, the fecret ftings of Conscience tell her, the has been Unfaithful to Gods Graces, and retarded her progress towards

Perfection.

Tis a very necessary help to Prayer, for a Soul to get a habit of being fo dead to the World, as to live only to God, and in God, her only center and true repose. This is the end of our Creation, and if the deviate therefrom, to rake

Christian. Lib. 7. take a complacency in her felf or any Creature, the falls thort of the Defigns of God. I know well enough that in the beginning of a Spiritual Life, 'tis very hard to bring our minds off from thinking on vain and Worldty matters, and to habituate the Soul to ftrive against Imperfections, and adorn her felf with all Christian Virtues. However the must then reflect on her Imperfections, her good and evil Inclinations. as the finds the motions of Grace to Dicate to her. She is not as yet capable of a more elevated degree of Prayer, and to her Thoughts are profitably imploy'd in this lower exercise. But when God is pleas'd to enter into her, as to make her enter into him by a more intimate Union, her Thoughts then must be all upon God, and for him, feeing he is only her true rest and repose.

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Many Spiritual Persons sail herein not well observing the method and ways of God in the conduct of Souls. They have not an eye severe enough on their interiour, to discover all the motions of the Heart, to examine, and search, and find out the least root of their Imperfections. This must be done, and is good and profitable in its season. But when God calls us to higher elevations in Prayer, we must follow the conduct of his Holy Spirit, or we shall ne-

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wer advance in the ways of Perfection.

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CHAP. VII.

That we must not presume of our selves to attempt any manner of Trager but what is ordinary.

In our Spiritual Exercises we must ordinarily prepare the Subject of our Prayer and converse with God. This is the Practice of all holy Persons, and to do otherwise, is to fail in our respect to the Majesty of Heaven. If we be to speak to a King, or any Person of Quality, we think thereon aforehand; and shall we not have consideration of what we

have to fay to the King of Glory?

This preparing of the matter of Prayer, must be done some little time, before we set upon the Duty. Then we must lift up our Hearts to God, and defire him to put into our minds what may be most pleasing to him in our Recollections; and what ever it be, to entertain it in our Thoughts, and dwell upon it, unless God inspire us with some other matter, that calls upon us for our Attention and Fidelity. For to comply with this, we ought to quit the Subject we have prepared for our Exercise. Let us not soar above our Abilities, but make choice of fuch matters for Prayer as are most suitable to our Spiritual State, and we find by our Interiour to be most agreeable so the will of God.

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Let us never begin our Prayers, without asking God pardon of our Sins, and imploring his mercies. For to put our felves into his Sacred Prefence, and to converse with him, without a detestation of these impersections wherewith we have displeased him, is to make our selves unworthy of his Grace and Favour.

Tis of very great importance to know how God usually conducts Souls to Perfection, that we may the better comply with the Defigns of his Grace. All are not call'd to the same fort of Prayer: and without a special Vocation we ought not to apply our felves but to the more ordinary way of Devotion: whether we converse with God by discursive Considerations to raise our Affections, taking some Book to our Affiftance: or whether we call to mind fome Subject, wherein we formerly have found some Gust and Spiritual Advantage. Let this be done with Humility, Dependance, and Fidelity; for a Soul having no Call from God to a more elevated Prayer, if the cease her own Operations, the ceases to Pray, and falls into Distractions, or is guilty of Idleness. But it is far otherwite with her, when the is raised from Meditation by the workings of God in her to Prayer of Contemplation.

Tis true, that a Soul having placed her self in the presence of God, and thinking on the Subject she has prepared, ought to meditate thereon with great attention of Spirit; but if God please to take her Thoughts up with something else, she ought without any Disturbance, leave her own, to comply with the Operati-

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ons of Gods holy Spirit: For when God is thus pleafed to possess a Soul by the operations of his Grace, she ought to put no Obstacle thereto: which we do too often by our Industries, which seem to us necessary, and without which we believe we should do nothing: when as then we should give way to those Divine Operations, to the end they may become more efficacious. Otherwise we have less respect for God, than we would have for some earthly Printe, to whom we speak with much Reverence, as long as he is pleased to give us Audience, but as soon as he thinks good to speak, we presently are silent, and give ear to his words with much Attention and Respect, not presuming in the least sort to interrupt him.

Our principal affair is to serve God, the Unum necessarium, recommended to us by our Blessed Saviour; and therefore it concerns us, not to distract our selves with too many exteriour Imployments, though good and lawful. Because if the heart be bound with a Chain of Gold, 'tis no more at Liberty to converse with God, than if it was setter'd with Links of Iron. Wherefore whatever we can do for the Service of God, and Good of our Neighbour, let us do it with Willingness of Heart, according to our Talents and Abilities. But above all we must have an esteem of Prayer, and a desire to practise it; being sirmly perswaded, there's nothing whereby we can better serve God, or more profit our selves in a Spiritual 1 ise. For my part 1 in some sort more value Prayer, though impersed, than the best Assi-

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ons that carry more of outward Splendour, and
and seem more Glorious in the eyes of men.

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ie ir We must therefore never be disgusted with Prayer, nor quit the frequent Exercise thereof, because we, to our thinking, make little Advancement therein; but persevere faithfully to practise it in the best manner we can, and expect with patience the good pleasure of God. If we do our Endeavours, we have discharged our Duty and Obligation. The Servant that had but one Talent, was blamed by his Lord, because he did not improve it by his Industry.

When my Soul is not in a temper for the Exercise of Prayer, I use short Reflections to call to mind what is most distastful to me; and I make a Resolution to do it, or set upon it presently, if I can: as to converse with one, from whom I have an Aversion, or make some visit, where I know I shall be much mortised; that I may conquer my self in those things, which raise a continual War within me. I have oftentimes by this facilited the Exercise of Prayer, God being pleased by so much the more to dispose our hearts, by how much the more we offer Violence to our selves, to surmount all Difficulties.

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and from the re-Glorious in the eyes of men. We made tallityre . **q A H O**fgusted as the Property of a distribution frequent Exercise thereof.

How to pass from Ordinary Prayer to Contemplation.

Soul that does not nourith in her felf any voluntary Imperfection, having efficacious defires to live the Life of Jesus, ought to be passive to the Conduct of God in Prayer, and aspire after great Simplicity, by giving a check to the Discourse of her Understanding, and multiplicity of Acts in her Will and Affections, I am not ignorant that the ought to exercife her felf in Meditation and a lower degree of Prayer, till God is pleased to raise her to Contemplation: but withall the must elevate her felt as foon as the feels interiour Attracts, and thun a falle Humility, which hinders as to follow the Motions of God's holy Spirit, who communicates his Graces to the Perfect, to augment their Purity, and to the Imperfect, to purify their Souls from Terrene Defires.

In my judgment 'tis of great importance in the Exercise of Prayer, to receive with Humility the impression of the Rayes of the Divine Sun who rides in the Interiour of our Soul. 'Tis he that can enlighten us without the Succours of our Discourse: who inflames us with Divine Love, without troubling our Will with the production of a multiplicity of Acts, and in a manner almost imperceptibly makes all virtues to grow ripe in us, and arrive to Persection. If a

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Soul makes it her work to mortifie all her Imperfections, and defires to live a suffering life, for Prayer the need not much trouble her felf, God will do her Work for her, and in a man-

ner above her Hopes and Understanding.

God does not work this but in fuch a Soul that freely puts her felf into his Hands, with all submissive Humility, to be guided by Him. In this state of Prayer, the subject prepared for our Exercise sometimes may be useful; sometimes God fuggefts fome other matter, as he fees best, and the Soul must peaceably comply with his Communications. We cannot give certain Rules to such who are in this state of Prayer, God working in them as he pleases, in different manners. All the Counsel can be given, is, To keep themselves in an entire Indifferency to Illustrations, or Privations, to Sweetness, or Rigour.

Nevertheless I believe, we may profitably descend to a lower Degree of Prayer, when we have no Overture to one more elevated: but this is not to be done, till we often knock at the gate of Mercy with a holy Importunity. But if the Bridegroom of our Souls is not pleased to vouchsafe us a Kiss of his Lips by Contemplation, let us keep our selves at his Feet

by Conversing with him in Meditation

stare from and vigorous, when

It will much conduce to elevate a Soul to a more perfect Union with God, to have in memory many universal Verities of the Divinity and Sacred Humanity of Jefus Christ.

- 1. As, That God is Omnipotent and an Infinite Goodness.
- 2. That his Love to us is from Eternity, and the Eye of his Divine Providence is watchful over us to conduct us to Happiness.
- 3. That God being Love, requires nothing of us but Love and Affection.
- 4. That God is the Center of our Soul, which can find no true Repose but in him alone.
- 5. That Grace and Truth is by Jesus Christ, there being no other Means to attain Salvation.
- 6. That the Sacred Trinity, which confifts in the perfect Knowledge, and pure Love of the Divine Perfons, is the true Model of Perfect Prayer. These deeply consider'd, are very instrumental to elevate a Contemplative Soul, to so high a pitch, that sometimes she in a wonderful manner participates of that Life Eternal, which is in God himself.

I have made a Resolution to desire of God, that my Prayer may be altogether Intellectual, to the end I may not seel such sensible Gusts of Heavenly Consolations, which prejudice Nature. These are but sweet Bais sor self-Love, which sullies the Purity of Prayer, and diminishes the Contemplative Attention, which continues more strong and vigorous, when kept

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kept on the point of the Spirit, whereby the
Fire of Divine Love burns brighter, and with
more constant Flames. This is that continual Union which is the Object of Persection:
and whatever hinders this ought to be suspected, as are sensible Gusts of Devotion in Inseriour Nature.

O my Soul, let us therefore entirely give up our selves to God in Prayer, to receive from him such impressions as he thinks best: let our chief care be fully to submit our selves to him, and to be disingag'd from all worldly things, and accept with Thankfulness whatever he gives us. If he gives us nothing, let nothing content us, and peaceably acquiesce in Union with his Divine Will. A Soul faithful in the state of Privations, will sooner or later, as God sees best, be raised to pure Union and Enjoyments, on the losty Wings of Contemplation.

CHAP. IX.

Of the Trager of Faith.

This Prayer is a bare reflection or simple remembrance of God, who is believed by naked Faith, as he is seen and known by the Light of Glory. 'Tis the same Object here and there, but known by the Soul in a different manner. The way of knowing God here, is but learned Ignorance. Earth is the Land of Believing, Heaven of Seeing. To see God as we are seen

Lib.7 of Him, and understand all Divine Mysteries, is referv'd for the Light of Glory; here we must

walk by the obscuricies of Faith.

This Faith must be naked without Images or Representations, simple and without Discourse. universal without a distinct consideration of par-The operation of the Will is conform ticulars to that of the Understanding, Naked, Simple, Universal, Spiritual, Independent on the Senses. We must exped great Combats in this way from our Spirit, which will ftill be working, and rely on Creatures. But though it be much diffafled by the understanding part of the Soul, yet the must strive to die to her own operations, and willingly entertain what helps her in this Comwhich at last leave the Soul in exercise of pure Faith; whereby God is known in a higher manner, than those Lights which serve as a Medium between God and the Soul, for this Union of our Spirit with God by pure Faith is immediate, and so more elevated. The Will also must die to what ever is not God. To live only in Him, and to him by pure Love. For the Life of the Will is this Death; and this Death is not ordinarily wrought but by Privations.

This kind of Prayer is uniform, and not much lyable to alterations, nor brings any damage to the Body. For Nature has nothing to do in it, being not procurable by greatest endeavours of Humane Industry, but depending purely on the Will of God, who alone gives it when and to whom he pleases. 'Tis true, this pure and naked Contemplation of God by Faith is given

but rarely, and to those who have past through many Purgatories and states of Penance, to sit them for it. In the beginning it darts into the Soul but Transient Irradiations, like slashes of Lightning; if at any time they continue about half an hour, "tis very much: However they

work in the Soul very great Effects.

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One of the principal is, that this Light of Faith discovers to us the verity of Divine Myferies, Imperfections, and the Perfections we want, and practical Virtues: And all this at once, not successively one after another by discourse, which could never arrive to produce a knowledge so clear and universal. But indeed the understanding, has much ado to die to its own operations, and not act by Humane Lights, by being wholly given up to the obscurity of Faith. However this must be done, to be rightly dis-

posed for Divine Operations.

There are divers degrees of Contemplations, but what God is pleas'd to give us, must bereceived with submissive Thankfulness. While we live in Mortal Bodies, we shall have always fomething to purific, and therefore always fomething to fuffer, Three parts of our Life pals away in a Suffering condition. In a flate of obscurity, the Soul is intimately united to God, although the be not sensible thereof. I am much taken with the way of pure Faith in Prayer, whereby the Soul knows God as much as flie can do in this Life; and though it be obscure, it marters not, being fure and certain. For my part, take as much as you will of my Light of Reason, if the Light of Faith increase thereby. Now Beautiful is pure and naked Faith!

It much conduces to Spiritualize a Soul, to live continually by Faith, to esteem and love nothing, but what we ought to esteem and love. Man rarely will relinquish his Reason, and nevertheless he must raise hanself above it, or drag on the Earth with Impersections. Faith is a participation of the Eternal Wisdom, she only conducts us with true assurance; for her Lights though dark, are certain, and their obscurity does incomparably transcend the clearest evi-

dence of Natural Reason. Inclination of Many

Moreover, to make Prayer more Intellectual, and that Nature may have no hand in it, we must leave off some things, which usually did raise our hearts to God with a sensible Devotion: As Musick, Rich Ornaments, Devout Piduresin Churches, and the like. This is good and profinable in the beginning of a Spiritual Life, and fome time after; but when a Soul has attained purity of Prayer, there's no need to take her nourishment, that is, her Knowledge and Love but from pure Faith and Supernatural Lights infused into her. When we take not good heed, we keep not our felves fufficiently passive to the Operations of God, but we go a beging for the Life of the Soul to sensible Objects when God himself would nourish her with more purified Knowledge, and Diviner Love

Why should we hanker after sensible Gusts of Devotion, seeing Nature is commonly too much taken with them, to the damage of naked Faith, and the hindrance of our pure Union with God, which requires a total denudation of all Creatures? Notwithstanding when

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God tryes us with Derelictions, and gives us not admittance into his presence, but by things sensible and Discoursive Prayer; we must humbly comply with this state, and not pretend to higher elevations in our Addresses to him.

Yet if a Soul in this Interiour Poverty and Dereliction finds that the has a call to Interiour Sufferings, the ought not to feek after sensible things to raise her to God; but couragiously bear this Interiour Cross, as long as it pleases her Divine Bridegroom to continue her Tryal. This state is bitter indeed, but withall purifying, and makes a Soul capable of more intimate union with God.

CHAP. X.

Of the Sacred Darkness of Prayer.

One, that my Prayer chang'd, and became more simple, more strong and elevated. My Spirit went on knowing God, not by Lights or Gusts of Devotion, but by a certain Darkness, wherewith God is surrounded as with a Cloud. This Darkness made me see that God cannot be known, but is Insinitely above our understanding, which cannot better know him, then by acknowledging we cannot know him as he is. At other times Gusts and Lights were instrumental to unite me to God, but now this Darkness only was my Guide, and my Soul sinding her self lost in a prosound Ignorance of God

God, yet seem'd to me to know him better than ever, and I had no difficulty to Contemplate God in this manner; which leaving in me deep impressions of the Divinity, did also augment my Interiour dispositions of the Lore of God, hatred of sin, and such like matters.

It feem d to me that at this time my Praver became more continual. And I was much encourag'd with that faying of St. Denis, The this ignorance is the best and highest knowledge we have here of God. I therefore readily made my Addresses to God in the aforesaid manner, understanding well, that the knowledge we have of God by this way, is greater than that we learn by discourse, or Lights, or Gusts in Prayer. To know we cannot know God, is to know him as much as he can be known in this Life, his Grandeurs being Infinitely above our Understanding. And that our Understanding may live wholly to God, it must die to whatfoever is not God, whom we fee by naked Faith in a Luminous obscurity.

By this way God is more known and lov'd, than by many Lights and Affections, all which are lost in the obscurity of this Sacred Darkness, which makes a Soul see that the Persections of God are incomprehensible. Many good effects arise from hence: As a profound joy and Peace of Conscience, a simmess in our good Resolutions, and practice of Virtues, a great love of Self-denyal, in imitation of the unspeakable Hum liations of Jesus Christ:

One of the furest marks to know whether this Prayer of Darkness comes from God, is to see whether

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whether it leave in the Soul the knowledge of our Miseries and Insidelities: For the more we possess God, the better we see the least Imperfections. As for example, whether our intention be pure, or Nature has some Interest with Grace: Whether we too easily leave the presence of God for other things: Whether we comply with Gods Inspirations, or commit Insidelities. These and such like being clearly seen by this means, do much humble us, and make us careful to amend them.

The Soul in this disposition knows nothing of God but that he is Incomprehensible, and looses her self in this Darkness that surrounds his Grandeurs. This view with a view sees nothing distinctly of God in particular, but is a knowing Ignorance of what God is in himself. For though the excessive Glory of this Divine Sun makes his Light inaccessable to our weak eyes, yet this Darkness pierces our Interiour, and we know God in a transcendent manner by strong impressions of the Divinity, and are rais'd to a most intimate union with him. God requires of

This then is an excellent manner to take up our Thoughts with God in our Addresses to him, by annihilating all our Lights and Knowledge, to get into this Sacred Darkness that surrounds his Glory, that being thus dead to our own Abilities, we may confess that God is as much above our Understanding, as he is amiable above our Affections. Thus to know God, and confess he is above our Understanding; and to love God, and acknowledge we cannot Love him

The Interiour Lib.7. according to his Perfections, is to live dead to our Selves and our Abilities; and such God Loves best and knows with Approbation.

CHAP. XI.

Of the Lights of Prayer.

God sometimes in Prayer discovers himself to a Soul, as the Sun, filling her with Light, by which and in which he is known, and all other things she stands in need of, or which the Omniscient is pleas'd to manifest to her. We see well enough this Light, by which we know God, but God himself is inaccessable: As we behold the Light of the Natural Sun, and not the Body thereof, which blinds our Eyes, and by the benefit of its Leams the things of this World are made visible to us.

One born Blind imagins that if he could see the Light, he might see the Sun: But he would find by experience, that this Light would only serve to make him clearly see, that he cannot behold the Sun by reason of its excessive Brightness. In the same manner when we are in Interiour Darkness, we think we can know God bet er in the Light, and when this Light comes, it only serves to let us see, that God cannot be known by us in Mortal Bodies.

When in Prayer I have a view of God, or some of his Persections, of Jesus, or some of his Dispositions, or Maxims; it seems to me, that all these Objects have a particular Light in them

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them, which serves much to discover their excellency to the Soul But it seems to me that these Verities, namely, We must see from Evil, and do Good, hate Sin and embrace Virtue, and such like, as considered barely in themselves have no particular Light in them, to manifest their Goodness: But their Beauty and Excellency are discovered to us by help of the Light of Faith: As those Bodies which are out of the Sun, see

not themselves but by the Light thereof.

For th s reason I believe 'tis best for a Soul to take up her Thoughts with God, and those Verities that regard him; or with Jesus, and Christian Truths, as resident in this Sacred Breast. By this means the Heart and Affections will be much inflam'd with the Love of God, to adore and serve him, and imitate the Perfections of Jefus Christ. This fort of Prayer is simple, and does not put the Soul to the labour of much Discourse. For any Divine Persection, and the Exteriour effects thereof, are feen by her at once, by a fingular act of the understanding. As the may confider the Omnipotency by its felf, or together with the Creation of the World, the may behold and adore the Divine Providence by it felf; together with its admirable effects in the Government of the Universe. The Soul herein needs not multiply Discourses, but may behold all this at one prospect.

When we meditate on any Christian Verity; as for example, the Excellency of Poverty, without the Relation it hath to Jesus, the Soul loosing the sight thereof, falls into distraction, being carried insensibly to a different

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matter: But when the considers Poverty as infirin'd in the heart of Jesus, and practis'd by him, the is taken up with Jesus, which is much better. And so this digression proves profitable, and she gains by this loss. 'Tis the same, when we meditate on any Perfection of God, and falling from our first subject, we are happily lost in the depths of the Divinity, where we find no Love but of God himself. O Happy loss.

There's no knowledge more necessary for us, than of our Miseries and Impersections, because that, or nothing, will well ground us in Humility, without which we cannot raise Virtues to any height in a Spiritual Life. We may get this knowledge two manner of ways: Either directly, by considering them in themselves: Vir videns paupertaten meam; Or by considering the Divine Persections, in the Light whereof by restedion we discover our own Miseries.

and Imperfections.

The first manner is somewhat like a Wintersday, wherein we seel nothing but Cold, and see nothing but Sterility; yet it affords Light enough to work in us a low esteem of our selves: But this Humility oftentimes causes in the Soul disquiet, dependency, and discouragement. The other manner resembles a fair Summers-day, which is more Warm and Lightsome, and full of Resreshment. The sight of our Miseries by this way is more advantagious, and begets in us a more generous Humility, and fuller of considence in God. For the view of the Divine Persections, which is the chief and direct work of the Soul, raises in her a Holy Fire, which inflames

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flames her Affections towards God in the midit
of her Miseries.

Behold now the reason, why tis a great secret in a Spiritual Life, to behold all things of God, who is an Infinite Light; and never to forsake him, because in him and by him we can best

know and do our Duty.

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After that a Soul is habituated to march through the ways of Faith and Purity, the gets forgreat a Pacility to converse with God, that 'tis a crouble to her to descend to Creatures, knowing by experience that he only is her center, where the finds true repore, and her only Light to conduct her to Happiness. The Soul of Jefus Chriff, our Grand Exemplar, did not only abide in God by Apollatical Union, bur all his Thoughts and Affections were absorpt in the Divinity, which replenish'd this admirable Creature With Grace, Light, and Truth, for the Execution of the Eternal Decrees of his Heavenly Father for the Redemption of Man. He finish'd the Mysteries of his Mortal Life, but still conversing with God, and plung'd in the Divinity, wherein he beheld what he came to do upon Earrh.

Let us follow his example, that we may receive from God a Light to conduct us, which ordinarily is communicated to us in Prayer. Accedite ad eum, & illuminamini. Draw near to

God, and ye shall be Enlight ned

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CHAP. XII.

Of Paffive Prayer.

Passive Prayer is after this manner. We take a view of God in his Perfections, or of feath in his states, or of some Christian Verity, by the Light of Faith: and then the Soul abides in a perfect repose, gently receiving the Divine Impressions; which enter with so much Conviction, that she is presently warm'd and inflam'd with all sorts of Vertues. And though she does not distintly practife their interiour acts, yet she seels a delightful say by the sweetness of those impressions, and finds her self well aispos'd to be faithful to them on all occasions.

In Meditation God works with us, but we in a manner do all: in passive Prayer we co-operate with God, but in a manner the whole work is his. We must not easily believe that we are in a state of passive Prayer. To be disposed thereto requires great Purity, and long Practice of Prayer, with the advice of a good Directour, and in the interim to exercise our

selves in Meditation.

A Soul elevated to the state of passive Prayer, finds her self united to God, without any Labour of her own, and receives from him many Lights and Illustrations, Desires and Aftections, according to his various Workings in her. Then the Soul purely adheres to Grace, holding close to the Insusions of God's holy Spirit,

Spirit, and follows the Divine Motions, by the Annihilations of her proper Operations, When the is thus passive and dead to her felf, her state changes not, although her ordinary difpolitions may alter; for then the receives with equal Contentment from the hand of God. Darkness as Light, Aridities as Comforts, Poverty as Abundance, in a firm Resolution to will nothing but what pleases God, with an entire Indifferency, and a perfect Death to her own Operations to Duning Templity . mill sty

'Tis observable in this passive state, that the Soul fometimes remains in Union with God. and Contemplation of his Divine Perfections. keeping her felf in a profound Repose, as it were without Action: and at other times the acts by her own Faculties, as it pleases God to excite her to these Acts, her only business being to submit perfectly to the Motions of Grace, and the acting as Grace excites her, does not leave her flate of Paffivity, feeing the only moves her felf according to the Motions

of God's Spirit, and the mailest of the A Soul cannot arrive to this passive state, unless the be dead to her felf, unless the be advanced in Virtue, unless her Interiour Peace be great and stable, unless her Prayer be in a manner continual, and unless the be purifyed from all voluntary Defects. For how can God in fuch a gracious manner vifit a Soul, which is free from Difquier and Ordinary Imperfections? How can the hear the voice of God amongst the Noise of Creatures, if they live in her with any Affection? To pur our selves into the hands

of God, to do with us what he pleases in our Addresses to him, we must be exactly attentive to his Orders which he will interiously make known to us, either by Illustrations in our Understanding, or Instincts and Motions in our Will.

Perfect Purity of Heart requires, that the Soul have no Eye to her own Interest, but folely to do the Will of God. Her principal Care must only be to regard him, to love and ferve him, without curioufly examining his Gifts and Graces, the knows well enough that in passive Prayer there are many wayes to come to God, and divers manners to facrifice our felves to Divine Love. Some frend themselves in doing Good to their Neighbour, others in Suffering for their Faith by the Crueley of Tyothers by Ardours of Love in Prayer. The Soul must be indifferent to be saprific'd by Love, what way best pleases God , the Divine Will Being the fole Rule of her Choice, and nor the Beauty or Perfection of the State; fo that when the knows it is God's Will, a left clevated Condition is pleafing to her. Alst rad or bash ad off als

God is our Father and Directour, operating in us in different manners. Sometimes he infufes more Light into the Understanding, sometimes more Love into the Will, so that one faculty seems to be lost in the other. The Soul must be content with either, as God pleases, and crase her own Operations, to be passive to the Adings of God in her by his gracious Motions. A great deal of Work is done for us by

Christian. 421 Lib. 7. this means in a little time, towards Christian Perfection

The Soul that is in this state, must carefully thun two things: the Activity of her own Spirit, and the Impurity of her Affection. As for the first, our Spirit is very unwilling to dy to it felf, but will be acting and discoursing, we loving much our own Operations: fo that we have much ado to conquer our felves, that we may enter into an entire Paffivity, as to be only susceptible of Divine Motions. The long Habitudes of acting with Liberty hinders this Annihilation; but we must fight for the Victory, and Grace at last will make it easy.

As for the second, the Impurity of Affection, we must be perfectly dead to whatsoever is not God, so as to seek nothing but him, and his good Pleafure, without any mixture of Self-interefts. The infinite Love of God to us obliges us to be faithful to him; and the Love we ought to have for our own good, obliges us to

spare no pains to attain to Persection.

CHAP. XIII.

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Of Pure and Perfett Prayer.

T much disposes a Soul to attain to pure and perfect Prayer, to give her felf up into the hands of God with an entire Submiffion to his holy Will touching this Exercise, to bestow upon her what state he pleases. A Soul that finds Attracts from God to depend on his Providence,

for

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Lib. 7. the Matter and Manner of her Prayer, must receive thankfully what comes from God, whether it be Contemplation or Meditation, beit with Delight or Difficulty, with Sweetness or Aridities. A Soul so purely united to the Divine Will, and dead to all things elfe, possesses God in a wonderful manner, not only in Con-

folations, but Interiour Croffes.

Purity of Prayer, as the present Light I have tells me, consists in a simple View of God by the Light of Faith, without Discourse or Imagination. Reason and Imagination have their part in Meditation, but not in pure Prayer. It feems to me that the Soul ought to be absorpt in God, and remain there in repose, being dead as it were to her own Operations. This Repose in God is by Knowledge and Love, whereof sometimes this, sometimes that is more abundant, and affects the Soul as God pleafes. I office a win to but

When God elevates a Soul above ordinary Prayer, to converse with him alone, the must make it her business to comply with him. The Virtues and Dispositions, which another time. would be the Life of the Soul, are not now, when the must live no Life but the Life of God, that is of his fole Knowledge and Love, without any Reflection on her felf. God then takes the Care himself of such a Soul, furnishing her with all necessary Dispositions. Think on me, and I will think on thee, faid fesus Christ to St. Catherine. In Prayer God infuses into her pra-Atical Lights of no long Durance, but efficacious : and out of Prajer the receives the fame,

Pure and Perfect Prayer does not confift in Gusts of Devotion, but in the supreme part of the Spirit in a peculiar manner, that is ineffable. For this supreme Region of the Soul is the facred Temple, where God is pleas'd to dwell, where the feels and tafts a Sweetness above all created Entities. The Soul conducted by Faith, and attracted by these Divine Perfumes, finds God in this his Sanctuary, and converses with him with such a Familiarity, as aftonishes the Angels to behold it. 'Tis here where the makes pure Prayer, feeing there's nothing but God and the Soul, without any Creature to interrupt this facred Interview, God working all that passes by Himself, without Representations, or Discourses, or Gusts of Devotion. This supreme part of the Soul being not capable of sensible Objects, God alone takes Possession thereof, communicating his Illustrations and Sentiments, which are necessary for a pure Union with him.

Perfect Prayer then is a certain experimental Manifestation, which God gives of Himself, of his Goodness, Peace, and Sweetness. An admirable Gift, that is not imparted but to the purest Souls, and ordinarily is but of small Continuance. But the Condition of Mortality will not permit of more, where we must live in Humility, Patience, and Sufferings. The Soul returning from these Divine Embraces, carries away with her great Love, and a high Esteem of God, a prosound Knowledge of her own Imper-

Imperfections, and finds her self altogether difposed to act and suffer, and practise pure Vir-

tues on all occasions.

Few persons arrive to this Purity of persect Prayer, because sew make themselves susceptible of those Divine Motions, by an entire Ann hilation of their own Powers. These great Favours would be more frequently bestow'd, if we had Hearts prepared to recive them; Favours which are of more worth than the whole World, and cannot be known but by Experience. For my part, I know nothing, I only have heard say, that in this pure and persect Prayer, there are admirable Unions, most intimate Embraces, Ardours of Love, so Pure, as may almost compare with the Flames of Seraphims.

We come to a perfect Union with God by a perfect Denudation of all Creatures; and this Denudation is acquir'd by continual Mortification, and fometimes by Divine Infusion. We must therefore pray much, and dye daily to our selves and all Creatures. Since that Original Sin hath depraved our Nature, we cannot live a Life of Grace, without dying a continual Death. When God acts with us in the Practice of Mortification, we shall soon dye to our selves, for he breaks us all to pieces on a sudden with wonderful Contrition of Heart, and kills our Corruptions unknown to us: so that a Soul dies more in one day by the loving Stroaks of his powerful Hand, than she would in some years by ordinary Mortifications.

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Let us therefore adore this Divine and loving Hand which kills us, to make us live; and
never complain but of the little Returns we
make for his gracious Favours. The Loss of
Goods, of Friends, of Honours, of Confolations, do much conduce to bring a Soul to this
living Death; for commonly we quit such allurement, when we lose the materials of those
Fetters:

In this Divine Exercise the Soul is wholly taken up with God, without diverting her Thoughts on any other Object. And though then to reflect on the effects of Prayer, would be a kind of Distraction, yet without her thinking, God leaves powerful Impressions in her, and pregnant Dispositions to practise great Virtues, and above all a love of the Cross and Humiliations, seeing he cannot possibly please God more than by suffering for Him.

CHAP. XIV.

Of the Hungring of the Soul after GOD, and of her being Satiated with Him.

I Sometimes find my self in a Prayer of Defires, which I may call a Hungring after God. For my intellectual Will had a strong Appetite for God, without any Production of other particular Acts of Love or Complacency, Go. as when we have a longing after Nourishment, without a Desire of this or that, but only we have a hungry Disposition. In this state

the Soul only Thirsts after God, as known by Faith in a general manner.

This Prayer was very Intellectual, my Natural Appetite had rarely any part in it; I neither fent up Sighs nor Ejaculations; and it feem'd to me to be compatible with some Affairs, and did continue though the Soul had Distractions in the imagination and understanding. Methought this Prayer was wholly Spiritual; for I know not how it came into my Soul, nor what it did there, only I felt a Hungring and Thirsting after God; and it seem'd to me, that I might still hunger after him, though I did possess him. This Prayer may be of long durance, without breaking the Brain, but we must be dead to Nature whilst it continues:

I felt also in my self a Hungring after the states of Jesus Christ, the possession whereof is absorbately necessary to the Purity of Love, and Infallibly disposes us to it: Whosoever desires pure Love, must have a desire of them also; the one not subsisting without the other. Therefore at present instead of fearing Poverty, I desire it: Instead of Fearing to Suffer, I have Inclinations to it. And my desight is, to take my

Crofs, and follow Jefus.

This kind of Prayer did appeale Interiour Combates and Struglings in me, and I found in my telf some affurance of a Suffering, Humble state, where God will have us live purely of Him, and for Him. What is more purely for God, than that which has nothing of self in it? Grace carries us to a Love of Poverty, and what seems contrary to our particular good, which

which we relinquish voluntarily, that we may advance the sole Interests of God. A Soul that lives this Life, lives in Purity of Love, and participates of the pure Virtues of Jesus Christ.

O what generous Resolutions must a Soul have to Love God purely? She must deny her self to please God only. There's no living a Life of Grace, without'a continual violence to our natural Inclinations, by taking up our Cross to sollow Jesus. We confess, O good Jesus, that except your Grace always prevent and sollow us, we shall never relish well this Sacred Hunger of Sufferings, and Humiliations, and Poverty; which is some small participation of your

Abjections.

It often comes to país, that God, who opens his Liberal hand to fill all Creatures with his Bleffings, is pleas'd to fatisfie this hunger he has rais'd in a Soul, by communicating himfelf to her in such a manner, that she finds her self wholly contented; and full of God. This fulness of God being once tasted, the Soul is ravish'd with Joy and Sweetness. This disposition fometimes fo totally possesses all the Powers of the Soul, Understanding, Will, Memory, Imagination, that there's no room for other Thoughts to enter, being wholly taken up with God. Prayer then is a feeling of God filling the Heart with Joy and Contentment. O when will it please your Infinite Goodness to infuse into Souls some little participation of this Fulness, that they may purely rejoyce in you who only can give us this satisfaction! This is a satisfying Fulness indeed, that leaves no place for This other defires.

This Prayer is rarely granted unless to Souls much mortified, and well advanced in the ways of God. For a Soul must be emptyed of all Creatures, before God can fillit. When a Soul finds her self thus satisfied with God, she must yield her self passive to the workings of Grace, and she will seel in her Interiour such a content and sweetness, as will render disgustful toher whatever is not God.

I find this disposition different from that which ordinarily we receive by Union with God. This satisfaction being a more profound and intimate possession of God, making all Comforts from Creatures, even most pleasing to us; become distassful, in comparison of those Joyes, that ravish'd the Soul in this disposition.

This Sa isfaction and Contentment does sometimes Exteriourly show it self, the Senses being so affected therewith; that if such persons imploy themselves about any sensible object, they

do it as if they were a fleep.

The Dispositions God is pleas'd to give me, increase in me daily a new desire of Solitude and Contempt of the World; where I find nothing but impediments to my Union with God. And seeing all my desires tend that way, whatever diverts me from it is displeasing to me.

It feems to me, I am now no more fit for Worldly Affairs, and I look upon my (elf as an old piece of Houshold stuff, that is good for little or nothing but the Fire; for methinks, God would have me do nothing hereaster, but burn with the Sacred Fire of Divine Love. Or like a poor Criple, who cannot work for his Living, I must

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Of Infused Prayer.

Our Bleffed Saviour has been so Merciful, as rogive me, to my thinking, some underfranding and experience of infus'd Prayer. In my Morning Prayer I found my self in the presence of God in silence with Admiration, Reverence and Peace. This took me up a long time, and though some Temptations arose in Inseriour Nature, yet the Superiour part of my Soul remain'd united to God, without any prejudice to her Interiour quiet. This Peace and Tranquility was greater than ordinary, more Solid and more Assured.

I conceive also that what God is thus pleas'd to insuse into us, be it Light or Assection, Peace or Love, 'tis hidden from Deceits of Nature, the Temptations of Satan, and the noise of Greatures. For God immediately insuses it into the center of the Soul, without the Ministry of our Senses, and so is not lyable to their onfets and vicissitudes, but always remains entire, as long as it pleases God to continue his operations.

I also conceive very well, that the Interious of Soul is a Sacred Mansion where God resides,

and does his works Independent on all Humane Industry and endeavours. There he sometimes manifests Himself and his Perfections, sometimes Christian Mysteries after what manner he thinks best. It seems to me that the least Ray from his presence is enough to make known to us what he pleases. Illuminet pulsum sum sum sum sos.

This is a very great favour for God to converse with the Soul alone in her Interiour. I am now no more astonish'd at what the Saints assume that their heart is a Tabernacle, where God dwells with him, and they enjoy him has wonderful manners. Nor that Souls of much Prayer do this without labour, and almost continually; for receiving so much, and labouring so little, I do not wonder at the Facility.

The Soul thus conducted into the Cabinet of her Heart, receives a great discovery of the motions of Nature and Grace, not only ordinary, but those which are most hard to be discerned. Knowing very well that God Communicates himself unto her by Insusion, the corresponds to his motions, and becomes passive to his operations.

The Truths she sees by this insused Light makes deeper impressions, then when discover'd by Meditation. And the Soul conceives far otherwise of Virtues, of Reformation of Manners, and how to Act and Suffer for God. It seems to her that now she begins to quit her Natural Inclinations, wherein she continued with much Impersection; and becomes more strong and generous, and more resolv'd to act for God.

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-on Except I deceive my felf, God has been pleas'd to put me in this flate by his actings in me. But withall he makes me know, that more Purity and Fidelity is required than ever, by dying to our felves, and the World, to do his Will; and more Humility by acknowledging our felves unworthy of his Graces; and to return to ordinary Prayer, when he leaves us in Aridities, and to bear them with content and refignation. I have feen but a small glimmering of this elevated Prayer, to make me the more to afpire after a fuller view, to abandon all to possess this entirely, to enjoy this Happy hour, one moment whereof is worth a thousand Worlds. Seeing God is pleas'd thus to favour us, why should we refuse his Mercies, by detaining our felves in lower Exercises?

I have now no more difficulty to understand, how the knowledge of many Verities are imprinted in a Soul that is unlearned, and not verst in acquir'd Sciences: And how by an Interiour Light she sees things without her a far off: And how she can know the Perfections of God, and her own Impersections. Here is the Cabinet of God, all the World does not enter into it, neither is the door always open. Come my Soul, let us knock at the door thereof with an humble considence; if God is not pleas'd to open it, let us wait there with content and quiet, and practice Patience. The times of Gods Visits depend only on his good pleasure.

If the Interiour of the heart be not well purified, it will not be disposed to receive these Insuficions and Divine Communications, for Pu-

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The Interiour

Lib.7. rity and Impurity cannot agree. I was ne. ver so convinced as now, that all things are to be forfaken to attend to God alone; and for this end to love Contempts, Poverty, and Suffer. ings; and that Grace requires of me to obey this Divine Call with Fidelity, not fearing the Inconveniencies of Poverty, but depending confidently on the support of Providence.

After that a Soul has received the impression of the Divinity in Infused Prayer, she sees and finds God every where, by a fecret of Love, only known to them who have experience thereof. Love has wonderful piercing Eyes, which refts not on the outside of Creatures, but passes through to the Divinity that lyes there

hidden.

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In like manner when the Soul has impressions of Jesus in Insused Prayer, the sees and finds him every where. For that intimate Communication which Jesus makes of himself to the Interiour Powers of the Soul, so takes them up, that the Soul fees Jesus in all things, who is the only Object of her Love; to whom the is so united, as never to suffer a separation. O how great is the Grace of Infused Prayer, and how Happy is that Soul who is partaker thereof?

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CHAP. XVI.

Of Prayer of quiet.

Behold what our Blessed Saviour has made me understand by Experience of this manner of Prayer. In my Prayer I found all my Powers in a Calm, and fill'd with great Peace and Sweetness, which proceeded from the Presence of God in my Interiour, whom there I beheld residing and working many Graces. Whilst this holds the Soul, as it were asleep, in quiet, the rejoyces; and this Joy is infus'd into her, and hardly knows how the rejoyces, feeling only in her Interiour a Sweetness and delightful Tranquillity: yet well perceiving God works this in

her by his Presence.

God likewise gives her great Assurance of his Presence, and experimental Knowledge that he is infinitely Good, Powerful, Mercitul, her only Soveraign and final Happiness. The Soul perceives well enough, that she now conceives these things in a more eminent manner than by Discourse, being in a Region of Light above her Reason. The sacred Repose she takes in God now present, gives her such an Interiour way of knowing and loving God, that she tasts his Sweetness, and so finds by Experience what he is. A taste of honey teaches better to know what honey is, than the most learned Discourses of its Nature and Properties: so the Relish we have of God in this sacred Repose, makes

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434 The Interiour Lib. 7. us know better what he is, than any Discourse in Meditation.

A Soul that has tasted the Sweetness of God, does not find a Relish in Creatures as sormerly. Whilst the Soul tastes the Creature, she ceases to taste God, and this Cessation is troublsome to a

loving Soul.

In this facred Repose the Soul is taught efficaciously, how to mortisie her Passions, and practise virtues, for the good of her Neighbour, when Charity requires it. And 'tis no small Mortisication to her to quit this admirable Enjoyment to go about exteriour Acts of Charity. The Soul that does not taste the Sweetness of God, knows not this kind of Mortisication.

In this state, where the Will is taken Captive, as St. Teresa says, the Soul sears nothing more than to return to her Liberty. And I can truly say, I know it is a Punishment, that does not a little affright the Soul. In the Sweetness of this Prayer of quiet the Soul learns a sublime way to embrace the Bitterness of Sufferings; to become indifferent to Peace, or War; to Action or Contemplation; in a word, to desire nothing but God alone: So that other things, though good and convenient at other times, now are troublesome unto her.

She conceives that these words in the Canticles, Do not awake my Spouse till she please, do signify thus much, as spoken by Jesus Christ to a loving Soul, Do not put my Spouse out of this sacred Slumber into which she is cast by my Presence. And though she much desires the Continuance of this sacred Quiet, yet it is with a

perfed

Christian. Lib. 7. 435 perfect Resignation to the Will of God, to do with her what he pleases. What she fears most, is least for her Infidelity God should leave her for another Lover.

When thou feeleft, O my Soul, God thus working in thee, infusing his Sweetness in a plentiful manner, dilate thy heart to receive it. and be respectfully attentive to his Operations in thee; for 'tis then he is pleased to treat thee magnificently, and of thy Miseries to make a

Throne for his Goodness and Mercies.

The fenfual man has no Experience of thefe Mercies; he may indeed have fome Idea of them in his Fancy; but they are real things in a well disposed Soul, and produce in her ad-To have tafted of them once mirable effects. or twice, is sufficient to make her rich, by infufing into her Understanding a certitude of the Mysteries of our holy Faith, and instaming the Will with ardent and solid affections to practise Virtue. And thus she knows more of God in a Moment, than before the did in many Months.

By these extraordinary Graces a Soul is more convinc'd and dispos'd to suffer Contempt and Poverty, and leave all things to follow Christ, than by a thousand discursive Meditations. However God does not cease to communicate these effects by other wayes, as by spiritual Lectures, holy Conferences, Meditations, &c. But when God is pleas'd to work all by himfelf in a Soul, he does much for her in a little

time.

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One of the principal Virtues that this state imprints in the Soul, is, To draw her to God, and

and keep her with him, so that she's more in Him than her self; Divine Love being a weight, that alwayes carries her to her Well-beloved.

Amor mem pendus meum.

If a great Prince should send some magnificent Present to one of his poor Subjects; this would give him more Knowledge of his Prince's Royal Grandeurs and Bounty, than to send him all the Oratours of his Realm, to set forth his Greatness by their Eloquence. So a Soul knows more of God by the aforesaid Favours, than by the

large Discourses of Famous Preachers.

These extraordinary Favours are not necessary to Salvation, nor yet to Persection, but very advantagious to confirm us in Grace. For these more special Communications work in the Soul this admirable Repose and sweet Calmness, to dispose her for the Receipt of great Graces, which bring her to a more intimate Union, wherein she sucks from the Bosom of the Divinity a Sweetness inestable, Strengthening, Purifying, and Comforting.

When the Soul is not in this Quiet, let her do what she can, no endeavours of her can procure it. If God sends it, let us receive it; if he send it not, we must be patient, and prepare our selves thereto, by the exercise of Mortificacation and pure Virtue according to the Grace

berstow'd upon us:

Having been in this Prayer of Quiet many days, it feem'd to me to be taken from me, for contesting a little with my Friend, to perswade him to prevent another with a charitable courtesie. O my God, how nice and delicate a

thing

Lib. 7. Christian. 437 thing is Grace? and the greater the Grace, it is the more delicate. I learn by this Substraction how poor a thing a Creature is, how unable we are of our selves to retain Your Graces; and to see that this also proceeds from Grace. I will hereaster make it my work to love pure Virtue and practise persect Mortification.

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CHAP. XVII.

Of the intimate Union of the Love of the Soul with God in Prayer.

The Soul in Prayer can hardly be expressed, only we may call it The Prayer of Unity of Love; because herein the Will feels no other Love in her Affections, than that which God has for Himself. One only Love seems sufficient for God and the loving Soul; it being enough for her to adhere to him with great Simplicity and Unity with this only Love, which God has for his infinite Beauties and Perfections.

The particular Love of the Soul is absorpt like a Drop of Water in the infinite Ocean of his Love by a Union inexplicable; and being so lost is found more perfect: as a Spark of Fire in a little Coal, cast into a Furnace, gives a heat infinitely greater, than what it had of it self alone. It seems to the Soul that she does not love, but God loves himself in her; and in this manner her Will having such Impressions of the Divine Love, has no other Sentiments nor In-

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teriour Dispositions, than those which Godhan for Himself. When she loves God in this manner as he loves Himself, she also hates Sin in the same manner as God hates it, by this inestable Union.

In this state of Prayer the Soul receives wonderful Discoveries of the admirable Wisdom of God, in his Proceedings about the Redemption of Mankind, by the Life and Death of his Son, so full of Sufferings and Abjection. God loving Himfelf, cannot but love the Crofs, which farisfied his Justice: and the Soul cannot but have a Will to fuffer, seeing she is in the Unity of Love with God; which Unity must needs clevate the Soul above Nature. And as the Soul of Jesus wholly absorpt in the Love of his Father, did rejoyce in his Sufferings and Humiliations: fo if we be in the Unity of this Love, Contempts and Mortifications, Dolours and Death it self will be lovely, and desireable, though quite contrary to our Natural Inclinations:

This Unity of Love does so powerfully conferain us to love Sufferings, that I make little difference between Love and the Cross: and I see so clearly, that all the Counsels of Jesus Christ, do so wonderfully advance the Purity of Love, that no natural Aversion shall determ me from them. I find in my Heart a tacit Consent of Love, to abandon my self to Divine Providence, and not to disquiet my self about Perfection. For I must pacify all the Emotions of my Heart, as well good as bad, to be in so prosound a Peace as to attain this Union.

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Lib. 7. Christian. 439

When God is pleased to communicate to a Soul this Purity of Love, he disposes her to so great a Favour, by some Sufferings, Crosses, and Humiliations. He that knows the Riches of true Love, knows these also; for they are inseparable, so that he who will not suffer, can-

not arrive to Purity of Love.

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My Prayer then tends to unite me intimately and continually to the only Love wherewith God loves himself; and my Soul has at present Attracts to nothing else. In this Love it seems to her she finds the Practice of all Virtues, in a more excellent manner than in themselves. I know very well that Love is a weight that continually carries the Soul towards her beloved Object: and my Will bending always towards God, it moves thither by a longing Inclination, full of Love and Sweetness.

It seems to me that my Understanding herein, does not with its Lights assist my Will; for I find my Affections all on sire, and panting after God without any previous Illustrations. I found me thought Divine Love immediately working on my heart by such most secret Touches, as

put me in a flate of perfect Union.

I find nothing to explicate this better than a Needle touched by the Adamant; which then turns continually by a secret Virtue to the Pole, and is unquiet till there it fix. Thus it stands with my Soul, being touched, I know not how, by Divine Love, having no repose but by fixing on God; and parting with all Creatures, she gently tends to her Divine Center without any Violence, being sweetly attracted to a perfect Union.

440 My Understanding in this state fees well enough what paffes in my Will and Affections. but it feems to me to contribute nothing , to work this amourous Tendency towards God. Not but that fometimes it prefents fome excellent Truths to quicken Love, but yet that Truth was there without it. I admire that after the Vifits of Friends I alwayes find my will converted to God, the only center of my Soul, and I know not how this amourous Inclination is enterrained and preferved in me.

I find by Experience that in this state my Soul is well disposed to practise all sorts of Virtues, though the make thereof no formal Refolution. After the Exercise of this Prayer the Soul is exnyal, defiring nothing but God alone She

understands also, that the cannot persevere in this happy state without a constant Love of the Crofs, of which the daily becomes more amorous.

I begin this Exercise of Prayer without any other Preparation than Purity of heart, as foon as I find my felf in fuch a Disposition; for God loving the Soul, does fometimes prevent her before the perceives it. I continue herein, me thinks without any Industry or Trouble, provided my Soul be but amorous of perfect Purity, and faithful to the Practice of Mortification. If I deceive not my felf, God has been pleas'd to vouchfafe me this Mercy, and it concerns me to be thankful, and defire the Divine Goodness to affift me with his Grace, that my Infidelities may not deprive me of this State and Favour.

CHAP. XVIII.

Of Interiour Silence, where God speaks, and is heard.

We can never arrive to this Happy state of Interiour Silence, where are the most secret Communications between God and the Soul, except we pass through three tryals, wherein we find much trouble and bitterness:

The first is the Death of the Exteriour Senses, whereby all Sensible Objects become in a manner distassiful to the Soul; for as long as she does amuse her self with any Sensual Delights, she can never arise to this Elevation. This general Mortification is so difficult, that the greatest part of Devotes suffer themselves to be conquer'd herein, and pass no further.

The second is the Annihilation of the workings of their Interiour Senses, wherein we have such difficulties to conquer, that unless God, who conducts Souls by his Divine Motions, does strengthen them in this Combat, and bring about this Interiour death by the secret workings of his Grace, they will quickly loose courage

in this attempt.

The third tryal is yet more laborious, for we must mortise the operations of our Spiritual Faculties, the Memory, Understanding, and Will, then which nothing is more difficult. 'Tis a long time before the Soul can understand how this must be done, and longer before she

can

The Interiour Lib. 7. 442 can bring it about. And except God be pleas'd to withdraw from the Soul those helps she re-

ceives from her own Lights and Affections, the

will never compass it.

In this Combat the Soul meets with a thoufand Temptations: As, that we do but loofe our time; that 'tis no better than pure idlenes; and much hinderance sometimes from Directors, who having no experience of this way, cannot understand it, much less approve it: Happy is the Soul that meets with a Director, to firenghthen and encourage her in the difficulties of this passage; otherwise she will never arrive to this Sacred Silence, unless by some extraordinary Grace and Favour.

The Soul then thus dead and annihilated, enters into this Sacred Silence; the beginnings whereof are somewhat bitter, though with a mixture of sweetness, by a certain experience of the presence of God in the Soul. Which being elevated above all natural Lights, to behold God by the fingle Light of Faith, is affifted by another Light, that feems to participate of Faith and Glory. For it has formething of the Rayes of Glory: Not that 'tis really either this, or that, but a resemblance of them:

Wonderful are the effects which God produces in the Soul in this state of Interiour Silence, For he deals with her as a Painter does with a Blank prepared for his Work, where he draws divers lines as seems best to him. God sometimes makes a filence in all the Powers of the Soul, keeping them bound in the dark, but in a disposition to do whatsoever he pleases with Lib. 7. Christian. 441

them. The spirit is a little busic to see what is doing, but being check'd, is quiet; and the Soul having nothing to rely upon, being annihilated in her self, rests solely on God, reposing her self in him with Patience and Humility. Otherwhile God puts the Soul without any operation of her own, in great repose and quiet, neither willing, nor applying her self to any thing in particular, but in a readiness to do whatsoever God manifests to be his Will. And this seems to me to be the most usual disposition of the Soul in the state of Interiour Silence.

At other times the Soul feels such a Fulness of God, that she seems wholly to possess him; insomuch that the Senses are partakers of the gusts and sweetness communicated to them: the Soul in the Interim wholly Mortified, by a constant readiness to be Sacrific'd to the Will of

At other times the Soul is wholly taken captive by Divine Love, which giving her a relish of her Soveraign good, all other things, how excellent soever they may seem, are but bitter

to her.

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The understanding here makes no use of the Light of Reason, but God is pleas'd to insuse certain manifestations quick and suddain; which work so secretly such changes in the Soul, that she cannot perceive 'till they are done. At other times when the Soul is in doubt, or troubled with some disorder, or discourag'd by her own weakness, she finds God showing himself present with her, to instruct, to quicken, to strengthen, to succour her, according to her present necessities.

444 The Interiour Lib.7.

The Soul in this state is disposed to whatforever God pleases, desires nothing required of her. God works his Will in her, and she is Humble, and Faithful, and altogether submissive and plyable to his operations. Thus the Soul must stand affected in respect of God; but she can never come to this without great Combates, continual Deaths, and long Sufferings. However all the Crosses can be endured in this world, are but a cheap rate to purchase the enjoyment of God but for a moment.

In this flate of Interiour filence the Soul cannot prescribe any Law to her self in her Spiritual Exercises, but wait with all Humility to receive what God shall give her, and be Faithful in corresponding thereto. Sometimes she Suffer, sometimes she Acts, either in this or that manner, according to the Nature of the Divine Impres-

fions.

CHAP. XIII.

Of most Parified Contemplation.

One knowledge of a state of Prayer, wherein at present I must constantly exercise my self, as some Servants of God advise me, but the reason they tell me I understand not: My Prayer then is a denudation of all Creatures, where the Soul, as it seems to her, does nothing but enter into possession of God in a peculiar manner, who works in her what he pleases, without her knowledge or discovery.

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fuffer much from her imagination, which will be still proposing her Representations, Lights, and Sentiments, according to her usual practice; but the Soul must quit all these to yield her self passive to the operations of God. Yea, even Spiritual Lecture at this time proves hurtful, because it keeps up the ordinary way of working in the Soul. Neither is this to tempt God, seeing he will have the Soul to treat with him in this manner; and her present disposition thus requiring, the ought to be Faithful in com-

plying with ida

There be many degrees of this denudation whereof I speak. The first takes from the Soul what Lights and Affections the got discursive Meditations, to give her in lieu thereof a more noble knowledge and love of God. The fecond evacuates this knowledge, by infufing particular and diffinct notions of God. The third, after our way of conception, is a pure and general knowledge of God by Faith. The Soul must pals through these several dispositions, as it

pleases God to conduct her therein, and remain in a perfect denudation, adhering only to God and his good Pleafure:

We must not be discourag'd at the difficulties we shall meet with in this sublime exercise, but prepare our felves to bear the Crofs they must endure, who are call'd to this state; and contentedly loofe our felves, to be found in God, Doubts frequently arise; for although the Soul in this Prayer hath often affurances of her well doing, yet this fome-

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times does not appear, and the humane Spirit, which is wholly blind herein, is much terrified. But when the Soul thus dies to her felf and the World, not by her own, but the operations of God in her, the is not idle, as the may fear, but disposes her felf to receive the Divine enactions, altogether extraordinary and Super-natural, which are hindred in her by her own operations. For the Humane Spirit must die, beforea new Super-natural Life can arise in her.

The Soul begins this passive Prayer by having an eye to God in himself, confus'd and general: After which she receives Divine Insusions, as God sees good, or remains suffering in a total denudation, desiring nothing else but to suffer, seeing she finds at present that this is the will of God. The Soul cannot well give an account of what passes in her in this state of Passivity; God working in her and by her what she knows not: Only she sees obscurely, that all goes well with her in her Interiour, and that God is hers,

and that fuffices.

And indeed the need not fear, seeing a Soul thus passive, and given up totally into the hands of God, is more under the Sacred wings of his Protection than ever, and belonging in a singular manner to his Providence. Nor is it expedient the Soul should always know this work of God in her, who would but hinder it by her reflections and complacences; and therefore God keeps often from her knowledge for her good.

This passive Contemplation cannot be understood but by experience. For God takes posseossin of the Soul in a much other manner than rit, ed.

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ders as he pleases, and the Soul receives the Diavine operations, co-operating therewith in a fort very sublime and Spiritual. For the Soul is not idle, but acts with a real activity, elevated above her ordinary manner of working. This is possible, for the Blessed in Heaven are persectly passive, and yet very active, their Powers working in a most sublime manner. By how much the more our Prayer is pure, it appears more passive in respect of us, who apprehend not things Spiritual, but by the service of our Senses.

The Soul in this state has daily experience of Divine impressions, not only in Prayer, but in many other matters; according to that of St. Paul, Spiritualis homo judicat omnia, The Spiritual man discerns all things. And this is wrought in a different manner; for sometimes God immediately insuses his Light and Love into the Soul, without any previous disposition; sometimes by the looking on an Image; sometimes by bringing to mind some passage in Scripture, we have read before; sometimes by a Sermon, sometimes by Conference, &c. But 'tis God always who works powerfully in the Soul, these Exteriour things being only subservient to his Grace.

The Soul then makes no Acts, but is wholly taken up with God, and his Perfections, or with Jesus and his states, or the subject given her in Prayer. I understood not this before this Light was Insus'd into me, and now my former Exercises in Prayer seem nothing in comparison.

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What is it that the Soul pretends to by her Meditations and Affections, but to unite her self to God? But when the does already possess him, she needs not but to repose her self in him, and live in him, and of him, as she defires. And all the Sacraments, especially the Holy Eucharist, serve only to establish and plunge her more

deeply in God.

Oh, how rarely does a Soul free her felf from all her own operations? And yet that hinden her perfect union with God. She leaves him, to come to him again, when the had nothing to do but to keep close to him. I observe, that upon my waking, my Soul has an eye to Jesus Christ, and reposes her self as in his bosom, by whom the finds her self attracted to the Contemplation of the Divinity by the Light of Faith. This Divine Idea of Jesus Christ eclipsed all the Images of Creatures; and at last my Soul was insensibly lost in a general and amorous knowledge of God; and afterwards the perceived no more of what God wrought in her, being then environed with Darkness, which clouded the Light of her understanding.

I also laid aside all Exteriour occupations, except such as I saw clearly God required of measurements. Actions of Charity, Visiting the Poor, &c. To intermedle much with such like things, does take up the time for Prayer and Contemplation; which is my chief and principal affair. And as I ought to serve God in a denudation of all Creatures, so I ought to be dif-engaged from too many Exteriour occupations, to treasure up time enough

with

Lib. 7. Christian. 449 with Mary Magdales for the one thing necessary. And because Solitude and Retirement from

Worldly Conversation do much cherish this manner of Life, I must embrace it as much as possible: But however with a high esteem of the Exercises of the Active Life, which are ex-

cellent in the order of Divine Providence.

Sometimes the string is to be slakned a little, to divert my Thoughts by Recreation, or Exteriour Actions. I have known Solitaries that have done so, for the preservation of their Health, and advancement of their Spiritual Exercises. I know very well that my Life has been too much taken up with amusements, and therefore now lought to be more Solitary and retir'd; otherwise I shall not be Faithful to the Grace of my Vocation, nor conform my self to the Will of God. If I have not a great care, the Devil will deceive me, and make me delay to my own ruine.

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CHAP. XX.

Of the idifferent Caresses. God vouchsafes a Soul in Prayer.

Those who practise Prayer, know by Experience, that God unites Himself to the Soul in different manners, all most intimate, most pure, and full of Sweetness. Ostentimes by the pleasing Attractions of his Goodness and Mercy, so delightful to the Soul, that for the time she in a manner enjoys a Heaven upon Earth Sometimes God unites Himself to the Soul by the Rigours of his Justice, trying her with interiour and exteriour Sufferings; so that only the supreme part of the Soul remains united to God, the inferiour part being in a Suffering condition.

Sometimes God unites himself to the Soul by his Sanctity, his Bounty, Power, and other Perfections; and to the end all these Unions may be pure, it suffices that the Soul render her self passive to the Operations of God in her; whether sweet or bitter, comforting or afflict-

ing, with Respect and Affection.

Tis observable, that to live this Divine Life, it is not necessary to find no Repugnance from sensual Nature; it suffices, if we continue firm in this state by the Superiour part, whether Grace could only advance us, and where we cannot subsist, but by being dead to all Creatures. He that will live this life, must resolve to suffer.

Lib. 7. Christian. 449

All the Interiour Commerce between God and the Soul, passes principally in the Will; the Understanding is not so capable thereos: but the Will receives the more intimate, more pure, and more persect Communications, being more proper for it. The Understanding herein is more lyable to Illusions, the Will is more assured in her way, and the Devil cannot counterseit what passes in her in the seelings of pure Love. For the Soul that has experience of the effects of pure Love, cannot easily be deceived.

From hence it comes, that the Purity of the Will is the principal Disposition for the Prayer of Union, be it ordinary or more sublime, by the powerful influences of preventing Grace. This Purity is altogether necessary, God being not pleased to work these Wonders, but in a purified Soul. And this Purity consists in willing nothing but Gods good pleasure, being dead to all other things, contenting her self-

with the orders of Providence.

God finding the Soul thus purified, especially in her Will, takes up his mansion in her Interiour, where he exercises his Divine Operations, putting her into divers states, acording to the different Designs he has upon her. Sometimes he is pleased to inslame her Assections with Divine Love, and to kindle this holy fire in her Breast, manifests to her his Divine Persections. Other times he puts her upon the Cross, and exercises his Justice for her greater good. Sometimes he hides himself, the more to purify her, and make her dye to whatever is not God Otherwhile he gives her Councels to advance her in Persection;

The Interiour 452

Lib.7 Perfection ; and then if the has not been faithful to his motions, he gives her interiour Checks of Conscience. Sometimes he enlightens her Understanding to enflame her Will; and the Soul being retired within her felf, finds her Divine Bridegroom working formething in her, to which the is to be purely passive, and adhere in all fimplicity of heart to his gracious Operati-

Being thus retired into the Cabinet of her Heart, she is elevated above her self and all Creatures; and being united to God, though he fend her Sufferings, the is not taken up with them, but Divine Love : the feels his Careffes, is inricht with his Gifts, and imploys all her Intellectual Powers to Love and Glorify her Well-beloved. Here is her ordinary abode, from whence the descends not to her inferiour part, but for necessity, and enjoying the Embraces of her Divine Bridegroom, the adheres to him by pure Faith and Love, without being diverted by her Imagination, in intellectual Contemplation.

I cannot but think that a Mistress of a House, that had a King and Queen in her Closet, willing to converse with her, would have a care not to divert her felf by other matters, and quit them to wash dishes in the Kitchen. What strange incivility would this be? yea, what infidelity would it be in a Soul that is honoured with the Presence of God in the Cabinet of her Heart, to have her near himself, to converse with her, and to ravish her with these Spiritual Delights which are ineffable? Souls that are thus

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thus favour'd of God, if they quit him for exteriour Imployments, and temporal affairs, neglecting the Presence of the King of Glory for some inconsiderable Business, by this strange Neglect or Contempt of his special Favours.

must needs be guilty of deep Ingratitude

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O my Soul, be thou faithful to the Divine Calls; thou art too much favour'd of God, confidering thy too frequent not complying with his Graces. He calls thee to himself, his Attracts are powerful and sweet; let us quit Temporal things, and leave them to who will take them: fear not, we shall want nothing having God in possession. If Divine Providence dispense to us with so liberal a hand the great Favours of God's Spiritual Graces, let us not think he will deny us his lesser blessings, which concern the Body, and are as nothing in comparison. Let us betake our selves to Prayer, and never leave it, for that is our great and sole Affair.

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BOOK VIII.

Some Maxims of great Importance to conduct us in a Spiritual Life.

CHAP. I.

To have above all things an extreme Hor-

Here is nothing of greater Concern to us in this World, than to manage well our Love and Hatred, to which Passions our Will principally owes her Motions. Our Love ought wholly to be fixt on God, who is an infinite Good, and our final Happiness. Our hatred ought to have no other Object but Sin, which is an infinite evil and utter ruine of our Souls. Love makes all things easie, and what is done with great Love, is of great value in the sight of God. Who knows to love

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love cordially, knows how to do whatever God requires of him, seeing Love includes in it all Persection. Harred also makes all things easy, for from a torrent of Hatred commonly flows, an inundation of evils. He who really and from his heart hates an infinite Evil, that is, Sin; will be reveng'd on himself by severe Penance, and fly from it with such a Horrour and Detestation, that he would sooner cast himself alive into Hell, than commit a Sin that

breaks Friendship with God.

A Soul that fees clearly the enormous Maligmicy of Sin, and how is fighte against the great God of Heaven and Earth, to annihilate Him, if it was pollible, will early conceive an implacable Hatred against Sin, and abhorr it to the utmost with an irreconcileable Enmity; knowing well, that Sin can only separate her from God her final Happiness. This hatred ought to possess the Soul with permanency and such extensions, as not only to preserve her from Sin, but even from Passions and occasions thereof, and whatever may induce us to evil. in a word, we deteft Sin above all things dete-Rable, in our felves and others alfo, interiourly bewaiting the Minhappiness of our mortal Condition, in which we to often offend God, and are in danger ro lose him. I knew a virtuous Soul, whom God had made to fentible of the horrour of Sin, because injurious to God, that the perfectly detelted it, with ardent Defices never more to commit any. She did with continual Prayers and Tears, implore the Divine Majetty co preferve her from it; offering her felf Lib. 8, Christian.

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felf to suffer any thing, yea, the pains of Purgatory, or Hell it felf, if it was necessary, rather than commit a Mortal Sin, to which no evil can be compared. She understood that Sin is a Rebellion against God, and injurious to him: but that all the Pains we can endure, either in Time or Eternity, are but evil to the Creature; and all Creatures being as nothing in comparison of God, all the evil of Punishment they are capable to endure, has less Malignity in it

than one only Sin.

And seeing the Divine Justice has not ordained the pains of Purgatory or Hell but for the Chastisement of Sin committed, she defired they might work in her this good effect, as to ferve her for a Remedy against Sin, so as never to commit it, faying to God: Lord, you justly punish Sinners, because they have offended your infinite Majesty; punish me in mercy, that I may not offend you. In others the pain is the Punishment of Sin preceding, and the greater is the Sin, the greater is the Punishment; but dear God, of your great Goodness grant me this fingular Favour, that the pain in me may prevent Sin, fo that the Chastisements which I should have deserved for my Offences, if I had committed them, I may fuffer before hand; not because I have committed them, but to preserve me from offending your facred Majesty.

By this means, O my God, your Interests are secured, you shall receive neither Offence nor Injury; the Creature only shall suffer something. But what is all the Interest of the Creature in comparison of yours? If the pains be too few

which

which such Sin would have merited, instit on me what Punishments You please, provided you preserve me from falling into Sin so injurious to You.

This so noble and generous a Resolution could not proceed but from the pure Love of God, and from the persect hatred of Sin; and in both respects must needs be in a high degree well pleasing to God, and we may very well believe, that God bestowed on such a Soul very wonderful Graces.

CHAP. II.

To keep an even pace with Grace, neither out-running it, not following too slowly.

TI is our Unhappiness that either we do not I act answerably to the full power of what Grace we have received, by the repugnance of our Senfuality, or by our natural Levity and Inconstancy of Mind: or on the contrary, when the Heart is heared with the Fervour of Devotion, we will force Grace beyond her strength, by undertaking extraordinary Exercises and Austerities prejudicial to us. 'Tis our duty to shun both these Extremities, to correspond faithfully to what the Grace we have can do: and also to be humbled in confideration of that little we have received, offering up to God those motions of natural Love, which carries us to things extraordinary above our Abilities. Not but that we ought daily to defire the Increase of Grace and Lib. 8. and Divine Love in us, but it must be with Humility and Refignation, without Interiour Difquiet, well knowing that we can never advance

in Grace by the firength of nature.

What hinders us from fully corresponding to the motions of Grace, are some secret attaches to Creatures, our affections being not throughly purifyed. For when Grace acts in a Soul wholly dis-ingaged from the world she gives up her felf fully to God's Conduct, and moves towards him as her Center with more violence than a stone held in the Air, being let go, would descend to the Earth I say with more violence; for God being a Center of Infinite Goodness has more powerful attractions, than the finite Center of the Earth. The nearer any thing approaches to its Center, the faster it moves: so the Soul hastens to the greatest Union with God, by how much the more the approaches to him with inflamed Affections.

But we must have a care not to advance too speedily to the elevated states of Perfection, whether as yet the Grace we have does not invite us. Oftentimes we would rather regulate our selves by the Graces we see in others, than our own: for observing them do wonderfully well in perfecting themselves, and profiting others, we will needs follow their example; and this may fooner proceed from a natural defire of our own excellence and effeem, then from a motion of Grace, and to please God. And so we put our felves out of the way-going rather back than advancing, we will be following their wayes, and not walk in that where Grace has put us. It con-

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cerns us therefore every one to observe and follow faithfully the Attracts of that Gracethey have received; for what have we to do with the Graces of others which make a glorious show, and to which we have not a Call from God ?

The Beauty of Christianity is not in the Outfide; for the greatest Saints feem sometimes more despicable than others, but interiour Graces, Omnis Gloria Filia Regis ab Intus, which working wonderfully in them, makes them in love with Contempt and Poverty, with Pains and Sufferings, whereby they become like to Jesus, poor, despised, suffering and forsaken. Behold herein the Essence, Life and Heart of Christianity. For 'tis in his Suffering Saints that God works the most admirable effects of Grace; and he rakes the greatest delights in them, because they are so many Copies of his Well-beloved Son in small Characters. But here lyes the mystery, that a Soul suffer her self to be in the hand of Grace as fost Wax, plyable to her Impressions, and faithful to follow her Directions. To be faithful, I fay, to be faithful to the Motions of Grace, is all in all in a Spiritual Life.

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CHAP. III.

That a Soul must wholly give her self up to God.

I highly concerns us to keep close to the Conduct of God's holy Spirit; and not conside in our own abilities, which may quite destroy the work of God in us: What can a poor creature do, if the Soveraign Creatour work not his will in us! All the Solicitudes and Contrivances on our part are not so prevalent, as to abandon our selves wholly to God, by whose Grace we are what we are, and without which we are nothing but Frailty and Insirmity. It is best with us, when we have in our Prospect and Affection God alone and his good Pleasure, being content with whatever he pleases to give, either for Soul or Body.

In this state a Soul goes on very well in all affairs, for an indifferency to the good pleasure of God, does not at all hinder her Co-operation, whether it be to act with God in Prayer, or exteriour Imployments. God by this means works in the Soul a disposition to enjoy or suffer, of Action or Contemplation, of Darkness or Light, as he pleases. For then she desires to do nothing of her self, but to follow entirely the At-

tracks and Motions of God's Holy Spirit.

A Soul that fets her felf a work without an eye to God and her Interiour, is imprudent, for what she so undertakes, is of no value, in that G g 2

CH A.P.

The Interiour Lib. 8. The does not the will of God; but withdrawing her felf from her necessary Dependance, endeavours as it were to conduct God, when the ought only to be conducted by him. If we were sensible of our misery herein, we would be afra d of our selves, Self-confidence is a thing so formidable, and we should discover a continual disorder in all proceedings, except in those

wherein we have an eye to God, and are indu-

strious to consorm our selves to his Divine

When a Soul has fully given up her felf to God, the receives Interiour Irradiations from Heaven, by which the discovers what the ought to do, and what God requires of her; and fo is not disquieted with solicitous Thoughts, but walks on securely in the ways of Persection. For this Abandonment preserves this Interiour Light, which daily directs her in the Knowledge of God's Will, to do her Actions with Interiour Purity. As the Light of the Sun guides us in our wayes, without which we should take one thing for another: fo the rayes of Grace discover to us what God would have us do, and if the Soul should not be thus enlightned, she would wander in the dark, and our poor Life go on without the Conduct of God in Mysts of Misery and Insidelity. The common Life of Christians is more guided by the Light of Reason, than the Light of Grace; but those that live by Faith are Interiour Christians.

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TO INCH A P. IV.

We ought to make it our Business to be content to Suffer.

Cathering was turbe considers of in the Bits F we will follow the ways of \ irtue in this earthly Pilgrimage, we must be content to fuffer continual Mortifications, lead what Life we will, be it Active, or Contemplative. In the Active Life spending our selves for the good of others, if we be not in a Disposition to sacrifice our own Wills with a Spirit of Refignation, while we would profit others, we shall endammage our felves; for we must expect to meet with Croffes and Occasions of Patience, for which if we be not prepared, we shall without doubt fall into many Imperfections. Yea, in the Sweets of Contemplation we shall find some Thorns as well as Roses, to put us in mind of our Suffering Condition. In a word, the Union with Jesus Christ crucifyed is the perfectest Union we can arrain in this Life.

When Jesus Christ conducts his Saints to Mount Tabor, they in a manner are out of themfelves being ravished with the Glimmerings of Glory, but upon Mount Calvary they receive the best Impressions of Perfection. 'Tis requifite a Soul should have a view of the Beaut es of Jesus, before the fee and seel the Horrours of the Crofs, left the should be scandalized at this last state, and her Palate should not relish the bitterness thereof. Spiritual Infants stand

in as much need of Milk as Gorporal. Our heavenly Father does not take his Children from the Breast, 'till he sees them strong enough, and capable of more folid Food. He says the first Dispositions of a Spiritual Life in the Sweetness of Enjoyments; but he compleats it in the Bitterness of Sufferings. That which makes us profest Christians, is Faith and Baptism: but the Cross and Sufferings make us practical Christians: and the greater they are, being born with the Christian Patience and Resignation, they advance us higher in Perfection.

We ought not then to fear Croffes and Sufferings, but rather embrace them with Peace and Affection. And we must hold this for a Maxim, that we advance in the way to Perfection, according to the Degree of Mortification and Self-denyal, which we cannot attain but by a Suffering Life. Let us therefore above all things abandon our felves to the Divine Providence, defiring nothing but by the pure will of God, without troubling our selves at what

happens to us. The interior alarma neo ovi motal

Tis no just matter of Assonishment to see in this world the wayes of the Just beset with Thorns and Bryars of Assistion, and the wicked to abound with worldly Comform in Beds of Roses. Those who will have no portion in the Joys of Heaven, have refreshments in this world, and find here their Paradice, to recompense that little good they have done among those many evils they have committed. But such who are preserved from Eternal Pains, have their Souls purifyed in this Life in the Furnace of Assistion,

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from choic stains they have contracted, which else would formewhat darken the Beauty of their virtuous Actions. Thrice happy are they, who by the Sufferings of this Momentany Life, have just Cause to hope they shall never suffer everlasting Burnings.

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To renounce our selves wholly, and strive against our proper Inclinations.

Wholever designs to be wholly for God, must likewise endeavour to curb the Motions of his Interiour and Exteriour Senses, which have not their Rise from Grace, but Nature: yea all such like Thoughts and Desires, and the Objects of our own Will, which we in Prayer mingle with those Communications God is pleased to work in us by heavenly Visits. But above all we must have a care to desire nothing without an entire Resignation and Submission to the Will of God, which ought to be the sole Rule of all our Actions and Intentions.

Hence it proceeds that we have no Will to ferve God, but as he pleases, according to the manner and defigns of his Providence; and when God will vouch afe us nothing extraordinary in a Spiritual Life, we fit down content with Peace and Humility. For we are dead to our Selves, to be living only to God's good Pleasure, which is the Soul of our Souls, our Riches, our Grandeur, our Perfection and Eleffedness.

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Humiliation,

We ought to remain in a Disposition of Self-denyal and Humility in the Presence of God, and desire nothing but the pure Ordination of his Will, who can make us poor or rich in Grace as he pleases. A Soul that receives excellent Graces and Gifts from God, ought not to rejoyce in the abundance of such Favours, but her whole content ought to be in the pleasure that God takes to be so bountiful to his Creatures so unworthy of his Blessings.

Wretched is that man, who has less care of his Soul than his Body, loving more to follow the Inclinations of Sensuality, than the Inspirations of Grace. Wretched is he who is all for the good things of this Life, a good House, good Apparel, good Provision, &c. and is content to have a bad Soul. Wretched is he who by his vitious Course of Life makes himself the most contemptible thing of his whole Family.

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is in worfe state than the meanest Creature. O

fad condition!

Believe 'tis far more easy to command our Pallions than obey them, to conquer our natural Inclinations, than to fatisfy them: and therefore more pleasant to walk in the wayes of Salvation than Perdition. 'Tis a wonderful Punishment to fuffer the continual Lashes of a guilty Conscience: an unspeakable Torment to have our Hearts always terrified with the Judgement of God hanging over our Heads, with the fears of Death which is uncertain, and the horrours of Hell, which cannot be avoided by fuch who neglect the Service of God, and die in their fins. To become flaves to the World and our passions, and vicious Inclinations, most cruel and ungrateful Tyrants, and to have no repose, nor contentment, not one only moment of true folid joy, is to fuffer a Hell in time, before that of Eternity.

We shall find nothing to be compared to the way of Heaven; the yoak of our Blessed Saviour is Easie, his Burden Light, his Will is Lovely, his Helps are Powerful, and the Consolations wherewith he refreshes the Souls of his Servants so abundant, that they are far more Happy with their Crosses, than Carnal Men with all their Worldly Delights and Pleasures.

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CHAP. VI. mishno ha

Believe the far more cary to committe How to Compart our felves well in Superiority rathering regardhan to family them sand their

Efus be your Light, and your guidey and your support in Superiority. To be in this condition feems to fome troublefome and infun. portable; because things do not succeed as they defire, but believe themselves to be a hindrance to the increase of Grave in vehe Souls of their Subjects, who might have been better governd by a Perfor thore capable and advanc'd in Perfection. Tis indeed well fald and the pretence is specious; and yet notwith Randing all this may proceed from Self love, and defire of our own excellence. Proftrate thy felf at the feet of Je. for Christ, and if he duranto thy Soul Divine Irradiations, thou wile discover the Truth of what I have faid herein. That little refignation we have to the Ordinations of God, create these troubles in us, God only expects from us fuch a certain measure of Glory, and we are for rendring more than he requires of us: Tis our Happines not to conform our wills to Gods good Pleasure, touching the manner of Glorifying himlelf, what pleafes him, does not content us. He will have us glorifie Him by Suffering, and we are for Action; We are for giving Alms, and He for receiving; in a word, we do not entirely conform our felves to the pure will of God.

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. We ought not to perplex and disquiet our felves with the Defects and Imperfections of those with whom we live, and are under our charge. They are Mortal and infirm Creatures, and not Angels, and to expect they should be faultles, is to look for Impossibilities, and flatter our Impatience, which would have no occasion of displeasure. This is but to afflict our felves for the lofs of our own efteem, which appears by our ill conduct in fuch fmall matters: And yet we pretend only to feek Gods Honour, and the good of Souls. Those who truly seek the Glory of God, sometimes are troubled; but 'tis a displeasure joyn'd with Peace and Tranquility, yea, abounding with influences of Heaven and Divine Love. A displeasure that rather increases than takes away the Peace of the Soul, and disposes her to a perfecter union with God, and to the practice of all Christian Virtues,

I know no better means to be humbled in our own eyes and in the fight of others, than the miscarriages that arrive by our manifold Imperfections. If I do a good Action, for which others think the worse of me, I shall not seem so to my self: But if I shall fall into a gross Imperfection, which neither I, nor others discover, how shall I be ashamed, and learn thereby a lesson of Mortification? When Nature is surprized, and as it were amazed to see her own Frailties, what prop can she find to uphold her Ambition? She must needs be humbled by this means, and so draws much good from evil.

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Lib. 8.

Who are we that we should presume to think that out pains and industry can add any thing to augment God's Glory? Know we not that he is Self-sufficient by reason of his Infinite Perfections, and therefore so replenish'd with his own Glory, that all the Glory Creatures can render to him is nothing in comparison? Alas! the greatest Saints in this respect can truly say they are unprofitable Servants All Creatures are oblig'd to serve their Creator, 'tis their Duty, and not to do it, makes them guilty; but this brings no profit to God, who is no less nor more Happy in Himself thereby; but only from hence it proceeds that he bestows on his Servants

great and glorious rewards. (A Diameter sale

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For my part I would never afflict my felf, nor be discourag'd for not doing all the good I defire and ought to do in the charge incumbent on me; but instead of being troubled with my own lafufficiency, I would rejoyce in the All-fufficiency of God. O my God, what complacency do I take to fee you fo Rich and fo All-fufficient! I am well content with my weaknesses, seeing they make it more evident, that you fland not in need of your Creatures. O beautiful Sun, enrich'd with an Infinite Light. live Happy in your felf, absorp'd in your own Beams, nothing can alter your Felicity. For all the Sins of Men or Devils, though they offend you, yet do not hurt you; no more than dirt cast against the Sun, would darken his Splendors in his Highnoon Glory. When I confider the defects in my felf, and the faults I have not hindred in others, either for want of zeal or capacity, I will exerLib. 8. Christian. 469 cise my mind in such Thoughts as these: 0 my God, your Beauty is not Sullied hereby, nor your Glory darken'd, nor your Mercies diminished, I know tis my Duty to be sorry for what Sins offend your Majesty: But likewise I ought to rejoyce that you are immutable in your self, and your Blesedness cannot be disturbed by our Iniquities.

CHAP. VII.

That we ought to have our Intentions Purified from all Self-Interest.

The Soul that seeks purely to please God, ought to be content with all designs of Providence whatsoever, whether of Mercy, or Justice, giving her self up wholly into the hands of God, to deal with her as seems best pleasing to him. For ought she knows, 'tis best for her to be afflished, and therefore she willingly submits to Gods chastisements, rejoycing thereat, and Blessing him for them: Yea, if she may but bring Glory to God thereby, she is content to be cast into Hell. In this state her Love is wholly centred in God; and she gives her self up to the rigours of Justice, that she may be entirly Sacrific'd to Gods Glory, which is an Intention pure from all Self-interest.

An indifferency to any state does posses that Soul which has a well purified Intention, with a perfect resignation to the good pleasure of God, to remain content with her present condition, being satisfied with whatsoever portion of Grace

she

The Interiour Lib, 8, the has received with profound Humility and Mortification. Being thus disposed the has no mind to any thing but what pleases God, and does that Faithfully; and by this means obtains wonderful Peace of Conscience, and joy

in the Holy Ghoft.

To Will nothing but what God Wills, requirer a great degree of Mortification and being dead to all Greatures; for this is the highway to the Purity of Divine Love. What did the Ancient Hermits fearch for in the Deferts, but by a perfect denudation of all Greatures to arrive to the Perfection of Divine Love? Let us fear and figh to fee our felves so engaged and befet with several Temptations in the World. 'Tis a hard matter but some or other may cease upon us, and rob us of that perfect poverty of Spirit, which puts us in full possession of God alone.

Tis a special favour of God to have a vocation to the Poor and Abject states of Jesus Christ: And 'tis no small Grace, when God conducts us to them by a Happy necessity, with little noise or stir to call the eyes of others upon us. 'Tis well enough if the Soul consent purely to the Ordinations and eyents of Divine Pro-

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CHAP. VIII.

A Conference clearing many difficulties touching Prayer.

Qu I N what consists precisely good mental Prayer?

I find many sorts thereof in Books. The
Saints have practiced it with much difference, and
jet all so good, that I am taken with them. To
which of them shall I betake my self?

Anf. The ways of Souls in Mental Prayer are to wonderful various, that 'tis best for every one to hold to that which they find most proper for them : Or elfe they will loofe their time in a wilderness of Thoughts without Spiritual profit. Hence it is that in Mystical Authors we feldom meet with what is proper for every Soul. And though we find very sublime and folid Verities concerning Prayer in the Writings of St. Terefa, Bleffed John de la Croix, and othere yet they have but described their own experiences, and not how the case stands with other Souls, unless a light discovery in some things agreeable to their illuminations. Such Infiructions are good to read, but not exactly to be followed, fo as to conform our felves entirely to their manner of Prayer. We shall find in fuch Books matter very profitable, and 'tis time well pent in Spiritual Lectures, and not without delight to Virtuous Souls.

Qu. From whence proceeds these different manners of Prayer, seeing there's but one Soveraign and single Verity in Godto be known, one Soveraign good to be Loved; and Charity being of the self-same Nature in all Souls, one would think there ought to be a great conformity among all those who know and love God.

Anf. That which makes fo many different manners of Prayer arises from the different manner of knowing God: \ Some converfing with him by Meditation and humane Ratiocination : Others receive from God Heavenly irradiations above the Powers of Reason, by which he manifests himself immediately to the Soul, as the Sun by his Beams : Others concemplate God by the obscure Light of Faith in an ineffable manner, which is a kind of feeing him without feeing him. Thefe different manners of treating with God, make not only different manners of Prayer, but cause also much diverfity in every manner. For example, in the Prayer of Faith, which feems more simple than the other, there are many degrees which represent to the Soul different views of God and Divine matters. When Faith is feated in an underftanding well purified from Images and alien Representations, the then discovers God more sublimely, as he is in himfelf, though but in a manner negative, general and confused, yet efficacious to work in the heart a greas effects of God, and ardent Charity.

All Books, and Sermons, and Conferences, will not fatisfy a Soul advanced to this kind of knowing God: For those manners of speaking and conceiving God, seem to her too full of imperfection. Faith wholly purified, contents her self with having an eye to the Light of Glory, which discovers God in his Infinity, although but obscurely; and according to the measure, that Faith is more or less pure and simple, these discoveries are more or less perfect.

Qu. Are all fort of People capable of these sublime manners of Prayer, and if any one desire to attain them, by what means must be go about it?

People's yea, some great Saints have never had it; as some good Servants of God, who have become Holy in the Exercises of an Active Life, which would not afford them much time for Contemplation, and accustom'd themselves to the ordinary method of Meditation; which is good and advantagious for such Souls, whom God calls not to a more sublime way. Those whom God favours with the extraordinary gift of Prayer, do possels an inestimable Treasure, and with this only Grace, which is the source of many more, they are rich enough; though never so poor in things of this Life. But seeing tis the meer gift of God, I account it Folly and Rashnels to think we can bring our selves to the sublime state of Contemplation, unless God elevate us by his immediate work and special H h

favour. All that we can do therein, is to dispose our selves by corresponding Faithfully to the motions of Grace, by dying daily to our Natural Inclinations in the practice of Mortification, and leave God to do the rest. Except God build the House, they labour in vain, who think to raise the Edifice by their own Abilities,

Qu. A Soul established in a sublime manner of Prayer, and that bath a long time practiced it, can she easily fall from this state?

Anf. If such a Soul gives her self over to her Sensual Inclinations, and commit gross Imperfections, becoming Faithless to Gods Holy Inspirations, she may fall from it. But 'tis very credible, she will return to it: For she cannot long endure the loss of so great a Happiness, without forcing her self by her Humiliations and Penitences to recover her sormer state: And as much as she dies to all Creatures, so much she advances to God. But she can never attain it without Practice a Fidelity; and therefore it highly concerns her to free her self from too many Worldly Assairs, and love Retirement. Notwithstanding those which God requires of us, as belonging to our Duty, will not hinder us from arising to such a degree of Prayer, as God hath prepared for us from all Eternity.

Qu. The most elevated and perfect Prayer is not without Darkness and Privations, and sometimes perplex dwith Interiour Crosses and Desolations:
But is there not a state of Light and enjoyment to be

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attained here, wherein the Soul may possess God
clearly and peaceably without any disturbance?

Ans. No, the permanent state of Enjoyment is referv'd for Heaven. In this Life indeed we are visited without Divine Irradiations, and Glimmerings of Glory, but they are only now and then, and transient. The term of this Life is working Time, and not of Reft; for acquisiti. on, not possession; where the Soul may daily purchase new Graces, and advance her self in Prayer, according to her progress in Virtue and Purity, by being Faithful to the Calls of God on all occasions. Gods usual way is to make Souls pass through Darkness, Temptations, Derelictions, Desolations, Exteriour and Interiour Sufferings, to come to a good Stock of Virtue, and a higher degree of Purity, which raifes them to a more tublime state of Prayer. And being exercised some way or other to raise them nearer to Heaven by Spiritual Ascensions, they at length leave Time to meet with Eternity. Neither must we wonder to see the wayes of the Just thus befer with Thorns and Bryars; for this is expedient to advance them in Ferfection and Divine Love.

Qu. How much time must we imploy daily in Prayer, if we mean to Profit thereby, so as to attain Persection?

Ans. We cannot much advance in Prayer without a long and constant usuage of this Divine Exercise; 'tis not enough to do good Works,

The Interiour

Works, but we must spend some Hours in our daily Devotions. Tis by Prayer we advance in the ways of God, and not otherwife. We mult be careful to imploy much time in the Exercise chereof, if God calls us to it, and not apply our selves to the Active way. Let us not be too Sofficitous to discharge our other Obligations; for a Soul in the state of continual Prayer, performs readily what the ought on all occasione. When the time comes for Confession, the is presently all dolorous Love & Contrition. When the Communicates, the is all Humility, all Delire, and Language Affection. When the is to correct, the wall Sweetness and Charity. When the is to help her Neighbour, the is all Zeal and Love. When the must set for God, the has an intention purified from all Self-Interest. And all this the performs in Virtue of Prayer, as it were without diffine Acts, but habitually and in an excellent fublime manner, by the special operation of Gods Holy Spirit; and not by Medita-tions or Confiderations, which are means only to find God. A Soul that thus once hath laid hold on God, does take her repose, and rest in him, making it her only business to Love and Worship him in Spirit and Truth.

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